

COMMUNITY DRAMA AS MEDIUM IN  
COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis reflects the author's views on the use of the medium of community drama within the method of community social work. Through participant observation, the author gained an insight into the medium over a period of four years in which he undertook some experiments himself, observed experiments undertaken by others, discussed the variables with colleagues and, through a literature search, compared notes. This thesis is an outcome of that research.

The author regards community drama as derived from psycho- and sociodramatic principles and roleplay, and as offering part of community theatre; but a unique contribution as a communication medium when facilitated by the social worker (enabler) to enlist local support in working on community needs. Within community social work, the medium consists of the following phases: the introduction and preparation, performance, audience involvement and the follow-up phase.

The enabler is viewed as an important link to facilitate the various phases, and guidelines are provided to ensure that the first critical attempt with the medium will be successful. Effective employment depends not only on the enabler following these guidelines, but also relies

on the co-operation of others involved with the issue , and calls for a unified objective shared by all participants. For this reason, the 'actor' target group must be carefully selected by the enabler before introducing the idea of community drama to the community. The introduction should follow a sequence of steps to transform the community's shared common idea/need into spontaneous dramatisation. When this is followed, little time is required for rehearsing.

Before the performance can take place, there are certain practical arrangements that must be seen to, which include the time, date and venue. The performance shows certain qualities: realism of the performance by the 'actors', the narrator's special contribution, the enabler's limited role during the performance, and side attractions that can accompany the drama.

The specific characteristics and qualities of the target audience are described against the theory on innovative types by Rogers and Shoemaker. The rippling effect on a wider audience in the community is also emphasised. The audience identifies with the performance on an emotional and intellectual level, while the post-performance discussion provides the audience with a forum to analyse the ideas communicated. This discussion can take place on a large group basis or be facilitated through the small-group discussion method.

Community drama within community social work requires the enabler to effectively absorb energies raised at the community drama through a programme of social action, flexible enough to incorporate the community's needs, but planned constructively and realistically to involve local support continually.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author acknowledges the contributions of individuals and groups in the body of this thesis, but would like to express his gratitude to the Cape Flats Distress Association (W.O.319), Cafda. While being employed by this welfare agency, the author was provided with an experimental base which he used to carry out the projects. Permission was granted to include this Cafda case material in the thesis.

The management further granted the author permission to carry out experiments which were not within the Cafda sphere of operation, and study leave when required.

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INTRODUCTION1.1 HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The author was motivated to engage in research on community theatre by the teachings, at the University of Cape Town, and the practical guidance, at the social work agency Cafda, of Professor H. Ferrinho in 1977. During 1977 and 1978, the author participated in some experiments and observed others carried out at Cafda, where he worked as a community social worker. These experiments provided further motivation for his application to register with the University of Cape Town as a candidate for the degree of M.Soc.Sc. (Social Work), in 1979.

The author was assigned to Professor H. Ferrinho for supervision for a thesis on "The Role of Community Theatre in Social Community Work in a Cape Town Squatter Area". In 1978, the author undertook two experiments with supervision and observed a play initiated by another student. In 1979, he undertook two experiments on his own initiative, assisted a student in the facilitation of a performance, and observed another student's play. In connection with these experiments, numerous discussions were held with social workers and other interested parties. The author also embarked on a literature search which involved extensive correspondence with people abroad.

During January 1980, the author undertook a study tour in MalaWi, where he investigated the use of theatre techniques in rural development programmes. On his return, Professor Edward Batson, Visiting Consultant to the Department of Applied Sociology in Social Work, was appointed as his Supervisor for the revised application for registration that he then submitted. This supervision took the form of monthly consultations at which the Supervisor criticised the work the author brought to him and suggested further steps in the research. The final responsibility for carrying out the work and reporting upon it rested, of course, with the author.

On the Supervisor's recommendation, the author adopted a fiche<sup>1</sup> technique in systematising all the information he had collected to date. This enabled him to classify his data in a meaningful order from which the chapter outline for this thesis emerged naturally. As a result, approval was sought for change of title of the research to "The Use of Dramatic Improvisation as a Communication Tool in the Community Work Process".

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1. I am indebted to my Supervisor for a most stimulating and rewarding introduction to the account by John Aubrey, the Seventeenth Century English antiquary, of the way Thomas Hobbes wrote his Leviathan: "He walked much and contemplated, and he had in the head of his staffe a pen-and-ink horne, carried always a note-book in his pocket, and as soon as a thought darted, he presently entered it into his booke, or otherwise he might perhaps have lost it". Prof. Batson has pointed out that "this technique has been efficiently exploited by Aubrey himself, Jeremy Bentham, Beatrice Webb, Jacques Barzun, and others too multitudinous to know of" (Edward Batson, Personal Communication, 1980, 1981).

This systematisation of his ideas provided the author with an insight which he was able to apply in two further experiments that he carried out in 1980, and one in 1981. A third experiment was planned but did not materialise. These practical experiences, coupled with various discussions on drama and theatre in the field of social work and social action, led to further insight, and an application for a second change of title, to "Community Drama as Medium in Community Social Work". The author's understanding of the medium was consolidated through his participation in a panel discussion organised by the Society for Social Workers (Western Cape). This workshop on community theatre included the contribution of experts from the theatre, social work, and mental health fields.

Various drafts of the emergent thesis were successively submitted to and constructively criticised by the Supervisor. The author's progress towards a final version was interrupted by a short period of military service and a three-month journey abroad during 1981, in the course of which he made valuable contacts with leaders in the field of community theatre and community action.

From time to time throughout 1980 and 1981, the author experienced difficulty in trusting the validity of his own thoughts and experiences, and more than once was on the point of giving up the research and the hope of writing the thesis. His Supervisor's faith in him and

constant encouragement helped him to continue and bring the work to completion. The whole project became freshly meaningful to him when his Supervisor persuaded him that the case studies he had made on his own initiative might not only be incorporated into his thesis, but used as its principal source of data and ideas. Finally, his Supervisor guided the author through numerous drafts of what he had to contribute, and this especially during the two weeks just before the thesis was submitted in October 1981.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The author's interest in community drama originated from the teachings on community theatre by Professor H. Ferrinho, associate professor in the Department of Applied Sociology in Social Work at the University of Cape Town. This interest was further stimulated when, as a social worker employed at the welfare agency, Cafda,<sup>2</sup> the author was privileged to be involved in and associated with community drama experiments undertaken within the context of community social work. Through participant observation, the author found certain clear patterns emerging from these experiments which he felt had positive implications

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2. CAFDA (Cape Flats Distress Association) (W.O.319), a family welfare agency providing the three methods in social work as well as various other services to the people in the Cape Flats. The Cafda zone includes Lavender Hill, Steenberg, Retreat, Vrygrond, Parkwood and Grassy Park.

for community problem solving. This thesis is, therefore, an attempt to explain the community drama both theoretically and how it can be practically used.

Although Professor H. Ferrinho introduced 'community theatre' at Cafda, the author prefers to view the bulk of the experiments he was involved in as 'community drama'. To avoid confusion about these terms, the author provides a description of his views regarding the differentiation between drama and theatre (see 1.3.4), and in Chapter 2 describes how his experiments gradually led him to accept 'community drama' instead of 'community theatre'.

The author views community drama as a practical medium which the social worker can employ without necessarily having a specialised training or interest in theatre or drama. Instead, what is required is an appropriate understanding of the different steps involved in facilitating community drama, and a community social work programme flexible enough to attempt to work on felt needs raised through the drama. The hypothesis for this thesis follows on these notions as the author holds that the social worker can utilise community drama as a communication medium within a community social work programme.

In testing the hypothesis, the medium of community drama and the method of community social work, as two variables, were difficult to control. The author's first attempts

were marked by a lack of clarity on the distinctive steps of the medium which are essential prerequisites for successful implementation. Difficulties were also experienced in finding a suitable community social work programme that could accommodate the objectives of the drama. These fluctuating elements obscured the evaluation process. The author overcame these constraints through a repetitive use of the medium within varying circumstances and different communities.

The author offers a descriptive analysis of the step-by-step process of the medium, illustrating its relevance within the method of community social work. These phases of the medium are illustrated by relevant extracts from case studies.

### 1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### 1.3.1 Community

Many of the terms in this thesis refer to 'community'. It is necessary for the sense in which this word is used to be clearly defined, as 'community' within the field of community social work, is widely interpreted. Milson says that one investigator looked at the word and his disconcerting conclusion was that beyond the recognition

that "people are involved in the community", there is little agreement on the use of the term. (1972, 2).

Lategan (1981, 75-81) claimed that sociology is the most appropriate discipline to provide guidance. She refers to the contribution Tönnies made in defining the "Gesellschaft" (modern community) and "Gemeinschaft" (traditional society). The communities in which the author experimented with community drama did not show any definite affiliation with either of the two types. The experiments took place within an urban society where the main common bond was not a geographical or demographical demarcation, but the shared common value, fate or function of the people involved.

In this thesis, the term 'community' refers to a body of people sharing a common need in a locality. To distinguish between the difference in the quality of communities in which the experiments were being carried out, the author refers to the 'open community' when the issue involved concerned a rather broad spectrum of people, e.g. Montcreef Farm<sup>3</sup> (see Chapter 2, 2.3.1), and to the 'closed community' when the boundaries of community functioning are definite, e.g. Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.2).

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3. The spelling is hardly standardised; this is the version adopted by Cafda.

### 1.3.2 Community Social Work

The term 'community social work' is used to refer to what might earlier have been called community organisation or community development. As in the case with 'community', much differentiation surrounds these three terms. In this thesis, community social work is viewed as the third basic method in social work.

Community work is undertaken by many people and, in the author's view, it can be considered that people working in the community to improve the quality of life through projects with community involvement can be doing community work. The nature and purpose of their work may vary. They may be involved in community health work, community educational work or community religious work. Comparing community social work with these other types of community work, it is clear that whereas the others show specific boundaries in their description, community social work is vague and wide open to interpretation. The author refers to community social work in order to accentuate the application of community work in social work.

### 1.3.3 Community Theatre

In Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, theatre is defined as "scene of action, field of operations: the



stage: an audience, house: the drama: a body of plays". The Concise Oxford Dictionary also refers to the two most important elements, viz: "dramatic performance on stage surrounded by spectators".

The author regards any type of theatre that speaks to the community, about a common issue, as community theatre. This view differs from the notion that community theatre must be a performance by the people, for the people. In the author's view, community theatre does not have to be performed by the people from the community, as it allows for many kinds of people to participate. Among these the author includes professional theatre groups travelling through various communities performing relevant theatre (Brookes, 1974), village level extension workers (Kahn, 1980), or the Bread and Puppet Theatre group (Schumann, 1968). Likewise, community theatre also encourages various media to be employed, e.g. songs, dances, puppets, mime, etc., and the author does not view it as exclusively associated with the oppressed, under-privileged or poorer classes, nor is it confined to rough, untidy or amateurish production.

#### 1.3.4 Community Drama

Drama comes from the Greek word meaning "to do". The Concise Oxford Dictionary refers to it as "play for acting

on stage" or "composition and presentation of plays".

The author views community drama as an authentic dramatic representation by community members of their shared feelings.

\* Community drama involves the preparation for and the presentation of the dramatic performance; it is done by the community, for the community. In this thesis, community drama is viewed as one aspect of community theatre, as explained in Section 1.3. Whenever the community expresses its shared feelings and needs through a dramatic enactment, the result can be classified as a community drama. \* This drama can also be expressed through mime, song or dance, but in this thesis the author only concentrates on the dramatic representation of real life situations. The 'actors' assemble a scene or set of scenes through which they enact their ideas dramatically with the aim of provoking and stimulating interest in the audience. \*

#### 1.3.5 Enabler

The author undertook the work recorded in this thesis in his capacity as social worker, within a social work milieu, but he prefers not to refer to the social worker, when reference is made to the person who initiates community drama. The author does not view community drama as unique to the territory of social work and

regards it as a medium that can be employed by all community workers or change agents.

Bert Hansen points out that the facilitator of community sociodrama is called the 'director of production' (1949, 177). He describes the role of this person: "corresponds to the discussion leader of a forum group and whose job it is to keep the action going spontaneously". Speyer refers to Brecht who used the term 'rehearsal manager'. "The rehearsal manager does not come to the theatre with an 'idea' or 'vision', a 'plan of business', and a complete conception of the scenery. He does not want to 'realise' an idea. His duty is to waken and organise the productivity of the actors" (1978, 15).

✓ For the purpose of this thesis, the author cannot accept any of these terms. In his interpretation of community drama, the initiator guides the phases continually without 'directing the production' or 'managing the rehearsal'.

( Furthermore, his role surpasses the mere initiation or facilitation of community drama as this role entails the enablement of all the phases.

The author does not regard the role of the enabler as limited to the male social worker. Reference to 'he' or 'him' in this thesis must not be interpreted as male chauvinism.

#### 1.4 COMMUNITY DRAMA IN PERSPECTIVE

The basis of community drama has been an integral part of human communication since the advent of man. Raul Leis, in his translated article by Conrad Halloran and Ross Kidd, says that "popular theatre started at the time of the cavemen who explained their encounters with dinosaurs through mime and rudimentary dances. In communal situations people used theatre to express all their social, political, and economic activities - hunting, fishing, food-gathering, initiation, war, etc." (1977, 1).

'Popular Theatre' refers to the specific type of community theatre where certain community members' feelings are acted out to communicate their ideas to the community. These 'plays' could be seen as the first community dramas. With a well-developed language, modern man does not have to rely on his dramatic ability to communicate effectively. Nevertheless, dramatic gestures are commonplace within human interaction, some people using them more than others.

This latent potential in people to portray their feelings dramatically has also been used in the therapeutic field through roleplay, psychodrama and sociodrama. These techniques encourage patients to act out feelings both individually and in groups, and the author views them as a theoretical basis for community drama.

#### 1.4.1 Roleplay

Lippitt and Hubbell describe roleplay as the "temporay stepping out of one's own present role to assume the role of another individual or of oneself at another time" (in Rabson, 1979b, 75). It "enables participants to explore situations similar to those in real life and to try out different behaviours and new approaches to problem contexts" Rabson, (1979b, 76). In the course of the author's work, he observed roleplay to be commonly used and generally well known within community social work. Within certain groups it has been employed to provide experience which enables people to acquire new knowledge and skills. It also promotes cohesion and solidarity and could stimulate discussion.

#### 1.4.2 Psychodrama

Moreno, the 'father of psychodrama', defined it as that which "explores the truth by dramatic methods" (Rabson, 1979, 1). Rabson goes on to describe how Moreno developed this technique to deal with intense social or interpersonal difficulties and private ideologies during therapy in a group environment. She further explains that "psychodrama is a systematised method of role playing which enables an individual to explore the psycho-social dimensions of his or her conflicts, problems, interpersonal relationships and life situations through enactment rather than solely verbal means" (1979, 1).

### 1.4.3 Sociodrama

Rabson refers to Moreno's definition of sociodrama and explains that he derived the word from the twin roots "socius", meaning the associate or "other fellow", and "drama", meaning action. She continues: "sociodrama is defined as a deep action dealing with inter-group relations and with collective ideologies" (1979, 73). According to Hansen (1949, 161), the group comes with its problems and asks for treatment, similarly to the individual client in psychodrama. Chetkow (1975) explains that sociodrama is an extension of roleplaying, depicting complex facets of a social problem and states that it can play a central role for group counselling. Rabson postulates that the three main factors in sociodrama are:

- (a) the group with the problem;
- (b) its dramatic portrayal of it; and
- (c) the therapeutic value for the participants and the audience.

### 1.4.4 Inter-Relatedness With Community Drama

Community drama is based on roleplay, in that participants also 'play certain roles'. Unlike roleplay where they "experience difficulty in achieving reality in the scenes" (Williams, in Rabson, 1979, 153), the 'actors' in community drama do not experience this difficulty as they only show what they really believe.

Psychodrama centres around the enactment of an individual's needs and problems. In the community, several individuals feel strongly about the same issues and it is this mutual concern that is dramatically enacted. While the dramatisation serves as a therapy for the individual in psychodrama, the group forms the focus point in community- and sociodrama. However, unlike sociodrama, community drama does not try to solve the group's problem through the enactment. It serves to disturb the equilibrium, making the audience think again, showing them their own thoughts. Sociodrama completes the action internally, but whenever a community-based problem arises, and community drama is utilised, a need for greater community commitment and follow-up action develops.

When a community drama is performed 'on stage' for an audience, it provides entertainment, takes on a ritualistic nature, and invariably becomes community theatre.

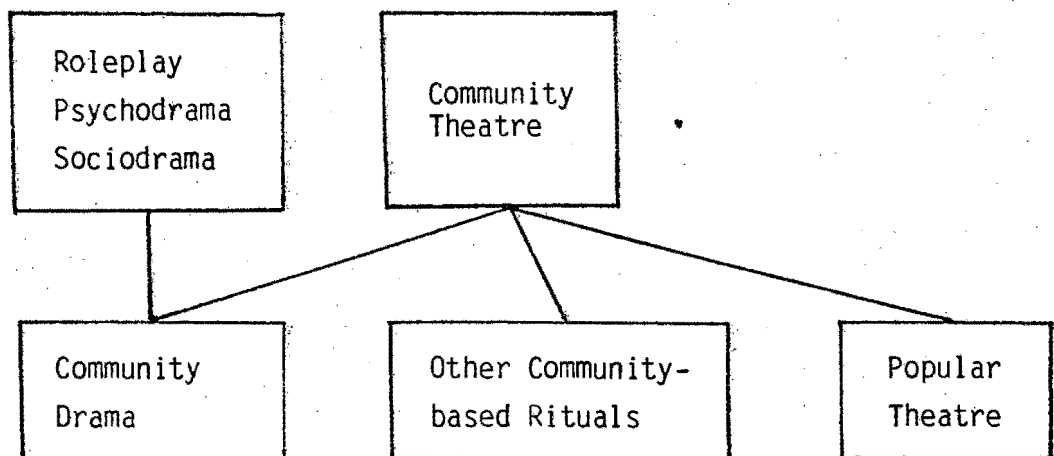
Community drama as community theatre has additional benefits besides the therapeutic. These have some relevance within the context of community social work but should not be seen as a goal in themselves: as artistic expression the community theatre can encourage local artistic talents; as an entertainment the audience is reached directly through the ritual, providing a relaxed social atmosphere; as cultural enrichment community theatre stimulates and preserves cultural forms of expression; community theatre can also provide psychological

advantages including recognition, status, confidence and cathartic experiences.

Being community theatre, community drama can manifest all these attributes; yet because it is simultaneously based on the principles of roleplay, psycho- and sociodrama, a guarantee is provided to ensure that the 'truth' is portrayed.

#### 1.4.5 Diagram Showing Interrelatedness

The author proposes the following diagram to give an indication of the interrelatedness of roleplay, psychodrama, sociodrama, and community theatre with community drama:



This diagram illustrates community drama as derived from roleplay, psychodrama, and sociodrama, but simultaneously placed as one of the categories of community theatre.



Against this background it is closely interwoven with the disciplines of the psychosocial on the one hand and of the dramatic theatrical on the other. The degree of involvement in the two fields may vary according to the nature of the particular community drama.

#### 1.4.6 Case Study

The author inquired into the possible use of theatre and drama within the community of a Service Centre for the Aged, one of the on-going service projects, administered by Cafda. The ideas raised through the investigation never materialised but his recording of the discussion with the Service Centre organiser, Mrs. A. Darries, confers lucidity as a case study, for it depicts the inter-relatedness of community drama with roleplay, psychodrama and sociodrama, and its association with community theatre.

#### The Use of Theatre and Drama at a Service Centre for the Aged

One of the services provided by Cafda is a Service Centre for the Aged which operates in the community centre. Some seventy old age pensioners attend this Centre daily, where they are provided with meals, have the opportunity to socialise and are involved in a programme based on their specific needs. The Service Centre organiser informed me that a problem repeatedly reported by many old people concerned their ill-treatment at home. Many are compelled to stay with their families in overcrowded living conditions owing to the shortage of adequate housing and limited vacancies in old

age homes). They are upset because they are viewed as a burden for family activities and are thus excluded from the family circle. In the worst cases they are even locked up in their rooms over weekends while the family goes out.

I discussed the possible use of drama and theatre within this group and this very problem was investigated to determine its appropriateness for the use within the medium of community drama. The organiser felt that there was not much that she could do to alleviate the plight of the aged. Complaints were shared in confidence and the old people were not too keen for her to confront the families individually. She also felt that her resources were limited, her time was restricted and intervention could cause retaliation. To report these problems to the social workers was viewed as a second alternative but we realised the inherent limitation within this action; overcrowded living conditions wouldn't easily be solved by social workers and as the specific needs of the aged required a discerning understanding from their families, alleviation of the problem requires a complete change of attitude.

In our discussion I recommended to her that one alternative to handling the problem could be to allow the aged to 'play out their feelings' 'like in a roleplay' [roleplay]. She immediately responded to this idea as the group was accustomed to role playing the activities of the Service Centre in front of an audience. She agreed that the dramatisation of their feelings would provide them with a much needed cathartic experience and that it would hold therapeutic advantages for the individuals concerned [psychodrama]. She also expressed her concern as the openness of feelings might cause embarrassment and, even worse, cause the guilty families to retaliate once they come to know that "granny has told the others about the family's behaviour". I agreed with her and recommended that this problem might be prevented by first acting out the issue within the confined and safe atmosphere of the group at the Centre. This presentation might then be followed through by a discussion to explore the various alternatives of reacting to the problem. Through the dramatisation and discussion they might learn to deal with the problem [sociodrama].

We also discussed ways of reaching the families and I suggested that once the group feels confident to act in front of their friends, they might be prepared to stage the same drama for the benefit

of a wider audience consisting of all the family members with whom the elderly are staying [community drama]. The organiser approved of this idea as the group had been involved in variety concerts [community theatre] in the community centre from time to time. We discussed the difference between these 'concerts' and the dramas which are based on a felt need, and agreed that both could be entertaining, drawing and keeping the interest of the audience [community drama as community theatre]. The main difference would be that the latter's main concern would be to convey a message so that the problem can be alleviated [community drama] (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980c, 1-3).

#### 1.4.7 Community Drama

The author ascribes four phases to community drama within the context of community social work; the introduction and preparation, the performance, audience involvement and follow-up. For theoretical purposes, these phases are distinguished as separate entities, but in practice they overlap and interrelate. This description closely correlates with the description of popular theatre provided by Kidd and Byram (1978, 14). They refer to :

1. problem identification
2. problem analysis
3. codification (putting the problems into a code - a drama.)
4. presentation of the code
5. discussion of code
6. action

The author compares the two descriptions as follows :

Kidd & Byram

1. Problem identification
2. Problem analysis
3. Codification
4. Presentation of the code
5. Discussion of the code
6. Action

Van Biljon

1. Introduction and preparation
2. Performance
3. Audience involvement
4. Follow-up.

Although there is a close similarity between the two descriptions, it would seem that for Kidd and Byram the theatrical side of their performances is emphasised.

This is evident from the following example. "In each village the 'kgotla', the village meeting place, is transformed into an open-air theatre complete with a stage backdrop and portable puppet stage" (Kahn, 1980, 59).

The author regards this emphasis as misplaced and sees the performance as an important link in the medium, but evenly balanced in relation to the other phases.

Another major point of difference concerns the role of the enabler in the performance. In the Botswana experiments (where Kidd and Byram derive their ideas from), the enablers, who were in some cases the village extension workers, actively participated in the 'presentation of the code'. The author endorses the importance attached to the enabler's contribution because of his crucial role in facilitating the various phases and provision of

continuity. However, unlike Kidd and Byram (1978), he sees this role as limited.<sup>4</sup> These points are enlarged upon in following chapters.

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4. And in this, as in a number of other matters, he finds himself recalling discussions with Professor H. Ferrinho during 1977-79, when both were involved in the activities of Cafda. See Footnote 1, Chapter 5.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIUM

In this chapter, the author provides summaries of the experiments referred to, as well as extracts<sup>1</sup> or complete case studies. These examples serve to illustrate the growth and insight gained by the author gradually during the period 1977 to 1981. The extracts referred to as 'case studies' are based on the author's own case records, some consisting of extracts from monthly reports submitted at Cafda. At the time of writing, publication was not contemplated, but it has been thought right to adhere to their original wording except for silent correction of obvious errors of typing, spelling, or punctuation. (Similar minor mistakes in other original documents have also been corrected). In other respects, the author has transcribed the originals faithfully with any blemishes, even though he would sometimes phrase them differently if writing them now.

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1. Reference will be made to these same case studies in the following chapters.

## 2.1 FIRST CONTACTS

### 2.1.1 The First Experiment

Professor H. Ferrinho introduced the idea of using drama and theatre in the context of social work at Cafda at a time when clients, approaching the caseworkers with their problems, repeatedly reported the suffering they had to undergo as a result of the high crime rate in their communities. The caseworkers interviewed several of these people, who were all keen to be involved in a programme to work on the issue. The caseworker asked them to record their experiences on paper and, when they met her, they enthusiastically produced vivid descriptions of their encounters. / At the first meeting when the individuals were brought together, the recordings were shared and plans made to create their own drama, acting out their own experiences with the aim of promoting social action.

More discussions were needed to materialise a production which was planned for the residents of the criminogenic community. It was, however, realised that the performance would not only convey their message to friends and neighbours, but inevitably expose the well-known criminal element as well. After the first session the participants realised that this exposure could result in retaliation and they refrained from further participation in discussions.

This experiment did not materialise but it opened new avenues and challenged the basic assumptions of community theatre. The author closely followed these developments and learned a great deal from the case- and community workers who participated. He discussed the outcome of the experiment with Mrs. Muriel Baker (the caseworker) and Mr. Bakaar Taliep<sup>2</sup> (community worker) and agreed with them that, as a result of the experiment, we acknowledged that local people do have the potential to portray their feelings dramatically and realistically. At this stage we did not know how they would be able to do it publicly with the intended community action to follow.

### 2.1.2 The Second Experiment

The second experiment was carried out with a women's group in Cafda village<sup>3</sup> under the supervision of Mrs. J. Fouché, one of the social workers at Cafda. At one of the group's meetings, the author introduced the idea of theatre within the context of the group goals. To these women the idea

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2. The author is indebted to Mr. Bakaar Taliep for his evaluative thoughts expressed during various informal discussions on community theatre and community drama 1977-1980. His constructive criticisms challenged stereotyped, superficial ideas and thus motivated the author to apply a thorough approach to the research.
  3. Cafda Village: a sub-economic housing scheme owned and administered by the Cafda Utility Company.



coincided with the locally well-known 'concerts'. Most of the group members belonged to the same church and, as this was the common factor in the group, they decided to portray their religious feelings in a drama which was based on a script frequently used by other groups. This play was eventually staged, drew large crowds, and helped the group to raise funds. In terms of group enjoyment, the production was a great success, but for insight into the phases of community drama, it did not contribute much to provide answers to the numerous questions that still existed.

## 2.2 SECOND PHASE

### 2.2.1 Community Theatre in Vrygrond

In 1978, the author continued to experiment with the medium in the squatter community of Vrygrond, where he was involved in a community social work programme. Two attempts were made with two different community-based groups. The first experiment had family planning as its theme and the 'actors' were a group of women from the community. They were trained to assist the community health worker to promote the idea of family planning in the area and to disseminate knowledge. These two women canvassed among their friends for more 'actors' and the author assisted them to decide on an appropriate script to convey their message.

This play was important as it started to show the requirements for the process of formulating a community drama. This experiment convinced the author of the appropriateness of the medium, but he was concerned about the fact that his participation overshadowed the limited contribution of the group members.

The second play concentrated on alcoholism as a theme and was scheduled to be performed at a community festival. Again the group relied heavily on the author and the performance did not show the true spirit of spontaneous dramatisation.

The author reported on the progress of the two experiments in his monthly reports at Cafda:-

### Community Theatre in Vrygrond

#### Family Planning

The community theatre took place on a Saturday afternoon in the backyard of a local leader's house. Fortunately, the host had a high fence around his yard and an entrance fee was charged. That way a manageable audience was accommodated and the disruptive element was discouraged from attending. This natural environment formed an integral part of the surroundings in the community and contributed towards a relaxed and social atmosphere. The audience felt free to participate and interrupted the performance without disrupting the proceedings.

The story was as follows: A typical family from the community is seen on stage. They have a lot of

children, the husband drinks, and it generally presents a miserable picture. A friend of the wife explains to her that she would be able to get help and advice from a woman in the community who had attended a course on family planning. The friend takes the wife to this trained volunteer and in turn she is introduced to the family health sister at the clinic. Later on, this sister visits her in her own house and eventually the family situation improves. There is a happy ending when the family is re-united and willing to improve their situation.

In one of the scenes, an entire lounge suite was dragged out of the house and arranged on stage. This comfortable suite took up most of the space intended for the acting, with the result that the actors all went for these chairs. Once they had proclaimed them as theirs, they did not want to move again. The result was that the play was characterised by very little dramatic movement and lapsed into a dialogue with the actors all comfortably seated and the audience bored to death!

After the play, a small conference was held with the audience, the actors and the health volunteers. Other health workers who attended the play also joined in. The audience raised some interesting questions and afterwards a list was drawn up of the names of women interested in being trained as volunteers. However, at the follow-up meeting, none of these ladies turned up. Feedback from the actors made us realise that the community was generally negatively inclined towards the idea of family planning. We realised that it would never work to try and 'sell' it in this way and the theme for the next community theatre on this topic would be 'family life' instead of 'family planning'.

### Alcoholism

In the meantime, the idea of community theatre was also discussed with the alcoholism group. The story was decided upon and we rehearsed a few times. With this group, we had the problem again of people not attending the rehearsals. So we started training a group of youngsters who were always around, and they formed their own choir and practised individual items.

An interesting observation was made during one of the rehearsals. I asked the man who played the role of a drunkard to explain to his wife how she

should behave to help him to recover. The answer was most amazing and the best lecture on the role of the wife of the alcoholic possible!

### Second Performance

The play was staged as part of the community festival in Vrygrond. Many of the people from the community as well as the surrounding areas attended as they were drawn by the various activities which formed part of the festival.

The community theatre was supposed to have taken place in the community centre because, although it was limited in facilities (chairs, etc.), it was viewed as a suitable venue to facilitate a meaningful production.

The 'actors' were pretty nervous before they had to commence with their drama, and when the people kept pouring into the hall, they became quite overwhelmed. They tried their best to talk above the noise but halfway through the performance they had to stop as the audience became quite uncontrollable. It would seem that if an entrance fee was charged, a smaller number of people would have attended and a meaningful performance could have taken place at the community festival.

### Effectiveness

It is difficult to say at this stage how effectively the message came across. Generally the community has accepted the play very well and several people expressed their satisfaction with the performances. These productions should be repeated because they are definitely a powerful medium of conveying a message. Probably the audience will also get used to this novelty and then they will respond in a more appropriate manner.

Positive feedback was received from the sister at the Lavender Hill Community Health Clinic. She told me that a woman from the area visited them and told them how she went home crying after seeing this play. The performance depicted the very situation in her own house!

### The Future

The players might be more keen to practise in the rehearsals for the play. As the two plays basically convey the same message, the two groups can be brought together, combining the two stories which stress the importance of a healthy family life and the dangers of alcoholism (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1978 a & b, 6-7).

The author continued to experiment and tried to improve on the performances held. The outcome of these rehearsals are summarised in the author's lecture notes. He prepared these notes and used them as an evaluation basis when he discussed his work with other members of staff at Cafda during an in-service staff training programme held at the agency during 1978:-

### An Evaluation of the Community Theatre in Vrygrond

During the following rehearsals, the problems of alcoholism were discussed continually. At first the women felt that the only way to deal with the problem of an alcoholic husband would be to go to the social worker and they will send him away. Then when he comes back, everything will go smoothly. One of the women in the group shared with the others how she helped her husband who had a drinking problem to get him on the road again. She stressed the fact that she had to support him and did not accuse him of wasting their money on liquor and wine. She explained that she tried to stay calm when he was drunk and that it was difficult to make ends meet with the little money she had at her disposal, to raise the family. Her strong faith also helped her and eventually he recovered.

Another interesting matter arose on the 'rent issue' one night during the rehearsal. At the time, most of the residents were in arrears with their payment

of the site-and-service charge of R6,50 per month. We continually advised them to pay these debts as they were in danger of their houses being demolished if they did not keep up with their rents. We also distributed notices and letters reminding the people of the nature of the problem. However, among some people there was the feeling that 'somebody else' should pay their rent.

At the night of the rehearsal, while the 'wife' was 'skelling' on her drunken husband, she mentioned that he used their rent money in order to get drunk. His answer was 'why should I pay the rent when Cafda is there to do it for us?'. I intervened and asked the 'wife': "now you ask the group who must pay, Cafda or your husband?". She asked them and, needless to say, they all felt that the husband should keep up with his own responsibility. In that way the theatre was used to deal with a problem that cropped up at that particular stage. Although it was not originally intended to be part of the message, we dealt with an immediate problem.

After another rehearsal, the story of the play had developed as follows: In the first scene three men are busy gambling. Two of them are getting drunk while the third only enjoys their company. The alcoholic's wife starts calling for him in the background but they are too involved in their fighting and drinking to hear her. When she eventually comes to fetch him, she starts fighting with him and the others try to assist their friend. Eventually they drag him away.

In the second scene, the happy family is depicted. The daughters help their mother preparing the evening meal for the family. They are glad to see the father when he returns from work. They share with him their experiences of the day and after they have finished their meals and are being put to bed, the man tells his wife about the problems in the other family, the one depicted in the first scene.

The following day, the wife meets with the wife of the alcoholic at the communal tap where they gather to do their washing. They discuss the problems of an alcoholic husband and the woman gets some sound advice from her friends: her friend explains to her the futility in trying to send the husband away to a rehabilitation centre. She suggests to her that she should try to understand him and to encourage the children to co-operate as well. If he feels that his ideas are important, he may start to react differently.

The next scene shows the men coming from work by train. They discuss their lives and feel very depressed. The man with the sober habits manages to convince his friend not to buy wine. When they get home, the wife of the alcoholic finds it difficult to believe that her husband is not drunk again. She is especially proud when he hands over the wages that he has earned for the week. They discuss his problems and he promises to make a new start in life.

### Evaluation

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With this community theatre I learned a very important lesson. It is vitally important to move at the pace of the group and to ensure that they have internalised their message before they commence with the rehearsals. It is important to take notice of the practical arrangements as well. The venue, number of people in the audience, seating arrangements, etc., could all have an important influence on the final success of the experiment.

The idea was that a conference, similar to the one in the first theatre would take place after the performance. Unfortunately, this was impossible. The play was staged one afternoon during the week of the community festival. Crowds of people entered the community centre and, because of the large numbers, the audience was completely uncontrollable. The performance had to be cut short without any meaningful and constructive dialogue established between actors and audience.

In the first experiments the target groups for the participants were not carefully selected and members of the community engaged in these experiments mainly represented the late majority and laggards. If I were to do it in Vrygrond again, I would not start with the residual type. I think that it would be far more economical to invest my energy with those members of the community who are really interested and whose own lives are 'sorted out'. Through them the message can be spread to the residual group (Van Biljon, Lecture Notes, 1978, 1-4).

### 2.2.2 Community Theatre of Peter Speyer

During 1978, another important contribution was made through the efforts of a community social work student, Mr. Peter Speyer. While being placed at Cafda for the practical side of his course, he embarked on a community theatre which was quite different to any of the experiments that were previously being carried out at the agency. Mr. Speyer trained a group of men from the squatter community of Vrygrond in theatre skills and through a series of workshops which included group discussions, he assisted them to build up a drama around the shared experiences of the group. This drama was eventually performed and proved to be highly powerful, as the message was well defined and excellently presented by community members. The author observed how it reflected their trapped feelings as farm labourers, working for farmers without any rights to defend their ill-treatment. This 'smooth' production did not show any of the usual 'noises' that accompanied the previous 'rough' productions.

This drama emphasised the dramatic ability of local community members and portrayed the effectiveness of drama and theatre in community social work. However, this production was only possible because Mr. Speyer was equipped with the necessary theatre skills. The author viewed it as a commendable production but felt that social workers who do not have Mr. Speyer's theatre skills should also be able to use the medium.



## 2.3 THIRD PHASE

### 2.3.1 Community Theatre in Montcreef Farm

During 1979, social work students initiated various groups which were part of Cafda's community social work programme. These groups were based on the needs of the community members and the idea was that, through the provision of educational programmes, their needs would be alleviated and community members would be trained to participate in a volunteer programme of social action.

In the squatter settlement of Montcreef Farm, the author assisted a student, Miss Anne Droomer, who was involved in a project where volunteers from the community had received basic training in health with the aim of assisting the community health worker as health auxiliaries. After several rehearsals and much support from the enablers, a successful play was staged. This was the first play the author was directly involved in that succeeded in conveying a realistic and powerful message. However, the drama showed serious limitations concerning the smooth facilitation of the various phases.

This community theatre was characterised by the active participation of the 'actors' at the rehearsals. In a Cafda monthly report, the author reported on the first contact with the group, the first and last rehearsal :-

## 1. First Contact with the Group

The community health worker for the area approached me with the request of assisting them with community theatre. She explained that the group was ready and while the group are doing their training as health auxiliaries, they would like to show the other members of the community what their role is. I thought that the group was ready and decided to accompany Paulene Niels (the health worker) to the group meeting.

At this first meeting I was introduced to the members and through the discussion that followed I noticed that the women were very keen on what they were doing. They had an idea of their roles and responsibilities as health auxiliaries. I explained the concept of community theatre vaguely to them and they were all keen to start with the rehearsals. The due date for the performance was finalised as well.

## 2. First Rehearsal

The first rehearsal was based on the discussions of the previous week. At first they decided to have the performance in the open air, on the site where they usually have their clinic. This decision was based on the fact that there was no suitable hall in the area where they could have their community theatre. After they discussed this issue, they realised the futility of the idea. If it was to take place in the open air, there would be no way of keeping control over the audience's behaviour. The play was planned for a Saturday afternoon and they all knew that during this time of the week, many of the people in the area would be under the influence of alcohol. Eventually one of the members recommended a church hall and this idea was accepted.

I proceeded by asking them to start to rehearse their ideas. They started and after they had completed the first scene, I asked the members who had watched their friends, what they thought of the performance. Their comments were very interesting. They successfully pointed to all the weak points of the performance and commented on the lack of dramatic movement, emphasising that the actors were not convincing.

I thought that they would be better when they tried the same scene for the second time, but there was still no improvement. I stopped them and realised that another discussion would be necessary before they could commence again. We discussed the scenes again and then the following was decided upon: in the first scene a woman is seen at the washing area. Her friend comes along and invites her to attend a meeting of the health auxiliaries. Simultaneously a woman with a drinking problem would come along and interrupt their discussions. Then, in the next scene, they will show what happens at the meeting of the health volunteers.

### 3. Final Rehearsal

The final rehearsal was held in the church hall where the performance was due to take place. I was under the impression that the venue was closer to the community and the actors confirmed that it was the only available venue. According to them, many residents had already bought their tickets for the forthcoming performance and they would all get there by train. The community and hall were both along the same rail line with two stations situated within easy reach of everybody.

The children were asked to show their items first and this they did with great enthusiasm. The man who volunteered to act as the narrator did not turn up and, as a result, I had to stand in. The rest of the scenes were rehearsed and it was decided to include an interval between the children's items and the drama.

In this rehearsal I misjudged the ability of the actors again. We went into the rehearsal without first discussing the various scenes that were decided on during the previous rehearsal. As soon as they started, they could not remember the scenes. This lack of clarity characterised all of the rehearsing that afternoon. Some scenes were repeated several times and I had to assist them continuously.

This rehearsal was of vital importance: the actors had the opportunity to use more space for their acting (previously we always had to rehearse in the cramped conditions of one of the houses); the children served as an audience and, although they were somewhat noisy, the actors could get the experience of acting in front of other people; technical aspects of the play, voice projection and movement could be worked on.

After the rehearsal, we discussed the development of the theatre and realised that the message had to be more powerful before it could have the desired effect on the audience. If the children took too much time with their songs and other contributions, some of the communicative values of the theatre would be lost. In the same way it was also important for the actors to have a clear understanding of when they should come on stage, etc. It was decided that we would have another discussion on the Wednesday afternoon to finalise everything. (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979b, 11-12).

### 2.3.2 Eric Atmore's Community Drama

Another community drama which succeeded in the employment of the medium was staged by a community social work student, Mr. E. Atmore. The theme of the play centred around the dangers attached to the hire purchase system and the participants consisted of community members who were all subjected to these dangers. Prior to the performance, the participants had undergone an intensive training on the uses and abuses of the system and after having gained the necessary knowledge, they were able to enact their ideas in a dramatic version of their experiences.

The author followed the development of the project closely and held several discussions with Mr. Atmore during this time. The author attended the community gathering where the performance was staged and was pleasantly surprised by the final result. This production proved that a community-based group has the ability to portray shared

feelings dramatically without training in theatre skills, and with minimum rehearsing. It also proved a medium that can be employed by the theatrically untrained social worker. The author expressed himself as follows in his evaluation of the project :-

#### Community Theatre with the Hire Purchase Group

Another community theatre that was extremely successful was the play done with a group of people who were all trained in the pitfalls and other aspects of buying furniture on the hire purchase system. Eric Atmore staged this play on the night of their diploma ceremony and the effect on the audience was immense.

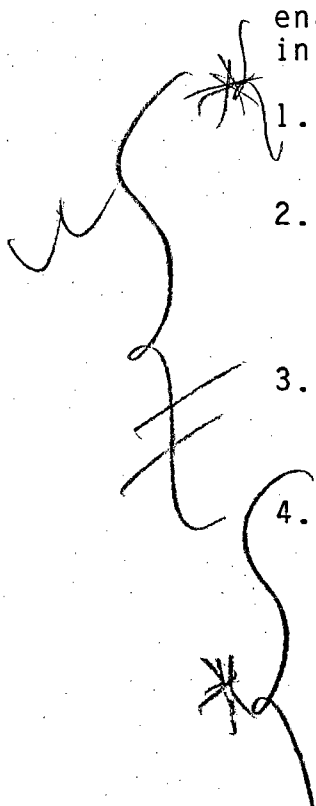
Mr. Atmore wanted to educate the community on the pitfalls of the hire purchase system. The geographic area where he operated (Retreat) was riddled with this problem and although many people needed to be educated on this subject, he could not 'start anywhere'. During a lecture on the subject, given at a local church, several of the church members remained seated at the completion of the lecture and expressed their interest in an on-going educational programme which could equip them with more knowledge on the subject.

This group had all experienced in some way the abuses of the system, and were ripe for the educational input on the hire purchase system. After their training period, they compiled their drama spontaneously and presented a powerful play.

One of the reasons for his success could be attributed to the fact that Atmore was adequately introduced to the use of the medium. With the other students he received an introduction to the use of theatre and drama in community social work programmes at the University of Cape Town as part of their Honours course in community social work. At Cafda the medium was discussed and he was guided to internalise the new concepts. Mr. Atmore had a thorough understanding of the use of the medium

whilst knowing the essential variables that he had to anticipate. He introduced the idea at the appropriate time to a proper target group and thus, through control of the two variables of method and medium, he avoided an unnecessary trial and error period.

For me this experiment was equally important in that I gained invaluable experience which could enable me to conduct community theatre successfully in future. Several points were highlighted :

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1. The actors must sincerely believe in their message before they can put it across.
  2. To be able to believe in this message, they must have clarity about the detail, e.g. if the theme centres around their role in the community, they must know exactly what it entails.
  3. Once they have internalised their roles and the message they want to put across, they will not need more than two or three rehearsals.
  4. The narrator's role is of extreme importance. He is the link between the various scenes and helps the audience as well as the actors to let the scenes flow smoothly. He comes on stage in between the various scenes and, if he cannot remember the flow of the story, he may write it down and read it to the audience and actors (this is what happened in this community theatre).

These plays have shown that community theatre can work and that it can be used extensively in the community social work programme (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979a, 3-5).

### 2.3.3 Community Drama with a Crèche Group

The author also employed the method successfully when an experiment was carried out with the teachers of a crèche. The author introduced the idea of community drama to the matron of this crèche when she complained about a lack of participation from the parents of the children who

attend this day care centre. She felt that these parents would contribute voluntarily towards the upkeep of the project if they had a proper insight and understanding of the history and daily functioning of the crèche. Through a series of group discussions, the drama was formulated and eventually a successful play was staged.

In the next case study, the author describes the development and outcome of this project. He describes how it consolidated his views; how it provided clarity on the role of the narrator, the employment of audience involvement and the follow-up phase.

### Community Drama with a Crèche Group

The people who participated in this community drama were the matron of the crèche, (Mrs. Benjamin), the teachers, the members of the Parents Teachers Organisation, and some of the people who participated in the training course.

### Introducing the Idea

During the discussion with the matron of the crèche, I learned that she had some difficulty enlisting the parents' support in the activities of the crèche. The committee struggled to bring the school up to standard and the matron complained that the parents did not seem to appreciate the efforts involved. "If only they would realise what we have done for their children", was her remark. We discussed this issue and decided to use a dramatic presentation of their feelings as a means to communicate and to capture the attention of the parents who usually did

not turn up for the meetings when these important issues were being discussed. At the time, the matron was also involved in a leadership training course, arranged by Bakaar Taliep and myself. At this course her problem was discussed and she received further guidance and support.

It was decided that other members of this leadership course (who represented another community) would also participate in the drama and invariably they had to participate in the rehearsals as well. It was difficult to have the rehearsals because we could not get all the participants together at the same time. The people from the leadership course had limited affiliation to the crèche group and, therefore, it proved difficult to enlist their support. Those members attached to the crèche identified strongly with the ideas to be communicated and spontaneously supported all rehearsals.

The plot covered a relatively long period of time and it was interspersed with a variety of important events. The group wanted to include all these details as they were viewed as important contributory, historical factors. Thus two major problems were experienced: too much time would have been needed to cover all these aspects in detail and, secondly, a large team of actors would have been needed if the long, drawn-out history was to be portrayed in detail.

I helped the group to decide on the most relevant issues and suggested ways of portraying the scenes where several people could be eliminated from the one scene. On my suggestion, they decided on a scene where they discussed the inspection after it had taken place, rather than the actual inspection itself. If they had to cover both scenes they would have needed a man to portray the role of the health inspector and invariably the play would have been unnecessarily drawn out.

At the final rehearsal, I noticed that they all felt threatened when I mentioned the fact that it was to be their last rehearsal. However, when we were finished with that rehearsal and they felt secure in their roles, they were very keen on the performance and radiated confidence. Before the rehearsal commenced, I informed them that a video recording was to be made at the performance, but not even the idea of being on television could motivate them. However, after another discussion and the final rehearsal, they were keen and ready for the performance.



The final rehearsal can be regarded as the most successful. By that time I should not take part in any of the rehearsing and for this reason I even kept my pen and paper out of sight! My attitude of non-interference had a positive influence on the narrator who realised that she had to keep close record of the proceedings. After the rehearsal, we spoke about the group discussions that were to follow once their performance had been completed. I ensured that she had internalised this role completely.

### The Performance

I managed to fetch some chairs which came in pretty useful for the play, which was produced in the old Torrence Home, the new venue for the crèche. The audience paid an entrance fee of 20 cents and this was organised by one of the parents. The audience mainly consisted of mothers with their crèche-going children, and a few fathers. One of the reasons for the poor attendance was that the play was being held concurrently with the Muslim religious holidays. Furthermore, the performance was not widely advertised before the time, due to the uncertainty of the performance. The audience might not have been large in numbers, but those parents who did attend were very interested. The smaller audience also ensured that it was quiet enough for a video recording to be made.

### The Scenes

Scene 1: The play starts with the community worker doing her rounds in Lavender Hill. She knocks on all the doors, trying to establish contact and to enquire about the needs of the people. She knocks on the first door, but the response is very negative and she is sent away by the woman who is more interested in her wine drinking than the problems of the area. On another visit she meets another lady who is glad to discuss the urgent need of a day care centre for children in the area. The community worker enquires whether they could use her house and she agrees with the provision that her husband has to be in agreement too.

Scene 2 : The lady carefully approaches her husband and tries to convince him of the necessity for a crèche. He is not keen on the idea at all and prefers to enjoy his meal, to relax, and to watch his favourite programme on television. He finally agrees, provided that their furniture does not get damaged.

Scene 3 : The community worker pays another visit to the lady. She is delighted to know that they can start with this project and they discuss the preparation for the children's arrival.

Scene 4 : The first day at the crèche is marked by a chaotic situation. Several mothers arrive with their children, they pay their fees, discuss the functioning of the crèche and try to calm the children.

Scene 5 : The crèche moves to a new venue and the teacher and assistants are seen vigorously cleaning and preparing for the inspection by the Health Inspector. They are not allowed to operate their crèche without being registered and this health certificate is the crucial document needed for registration.

Scene 6 : The teacher and assistants discuss the visit the crèche has had from the officials and imitate their behaviour and mannerisms, much to the amusement of the audience. They also discuss their invitation to a leadership course in the Vrygrond squatter area and express their ambivalence regarding attendance. The scene ends depicting a session of this course where one member engages in public speaking and a demonstration.

Scene 7 : The group has to move again and this time the crèche moves to its present venue. They have just moved in and need the support of the parents.

At this stage the narrator subdivided the audience into smaller groups to enable them to discuss the drama's message :

"But here we have the parents, let's ask them how they feel about it, maybe they can give us some answers. Parents, how do you feel about the play? We would like to hear your feelings and for that reason we are going to form smaller groups for discussion purposes.

Mrs. Goliath, you and the others in the one corner, Mrs. Adams from you onwards in the other and the other group can meet right in front. Please discuss what you have seen and select one person in your group to report back after we are all finished with our discussions."

It was very interesting to observe the leadership that developed from the small-group discussions. One of the fathers who was usually withdrawn from the activities, was elected by his small group to represent their ideas. This gave him the confidence to do so. The feedback from the subgroups was very positive and various people reported on ways that they were prepared to contribute towards the crèche. They all felt that they had a better understanding of the needs and functioning of the crèche, now that they observed the performance.

I observed that nobody expressed any interest in the leadership course (Copo-Kimo), during the report-back session. This emphasised the need to limit the message of the performance to one main theme. When the audience is bombarded with a variety of ideas, they might get confused and the communicative value will be lost. In this performance the one theme dominated and the other idea simply faded in the background.

### Follow-Up

During discussions with Mrs. Benjamin three weeks after the play, she informed me that some of the parents kept their promises they made at the day of the community drama. There was also a greater understanding and interest among the parents in general and this change in attitude she attributed to the community drama.

## Evaluation

In this play, the narrator's role was assumed by the matron of the crèche. She was a central figure throughout the development of the project and as the scenes covered a time-span of over two years, the audience would have become very confused if the scenes were not linked properly. The narrator had to expound on and convey a fair amount of knowledge in between the various scenes.

The narrator did very well, except that she became too didactic, tended to moralise, interpreting the story in great detail. In fact, she gave the impression that she was 'preaching' to the audience. In future I shall try to improve on this aspect.

The interest of the audience was maintained throughout the play, the message came across effectively and they all had an enjoyable time. There was enough action in their performance with the man, portraying the health inspector, and the husband of Mrs. Benjamin, being extremely natural and convincing.

At one stage the narrator could not remember what 'Copo-Kimo' meant. This was the title of the leadership course they attended and in full it meant: Course on People's Organisation. The narrator posed, quite spontaneously, the rhetorical question to the audience. One of the audience members responded to her question and this comment stimulated an intense discussion between the actors and the audience.

My own role as enabler came out clearly. As soon as the group feels confident about the message and once they have accepted the idea of conveying it through dramatic action, the enabler must step back. This he must do purposefully to allow the participants to do their own thing.

For effective follow-up it is important to have specific information available to assist the audience as regards the desired action. For instance, before the performance commences, the actors must know what they want the audience to decide on. This they must do with a flexible attitude to allow for their initiative as well. They must also be equipped with alternative plans of action to accommodate the needs of the audience as far as possible.

While the video recording was being made, nobody showed any signs of being inhibited. This is a sure indication of their total involvement in the dramatic action.

Community drama is a powerful tool but the participants must realise its limitations. If they would like to see effective change being brought about by the stimulus of the performance, they will have to be well prepared and effectively organised to absorb the promises made at the discussions. In this drama not all of the promises were carried out and generally the audience were not properly informed.

### Video Recording

The video recording that was made on the day of the performance was not very clear, but it did show something of the excitement and activities of the afternoon. Two meetings were organised to show these recordings but unfortunately a technical fault made this impossible. However, the idea of the video was a tremendous drawing card and parents, who generally never pay much interest, were all present (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 1-4).

## 2.4 FOURTH PHASE

### 2.4.1 Community Drama at the Youth Leadership Camps for Boys

On two occasions the author employed the medium at Youth Leadership Camps for Boys. This was done on the invitation of the organisation JAG (Jeug en Avontuur Groep), an organisation involved in youth work. The purpose of these camps was to expose the boys to training situations that would foster leadership abilities. The author viewed community drama as a medium to evaluate the proceedings of these camps and to enable the boys to contribute actively in the process.

These camps provided a unique opportunity as they constitute a 'closed' community; there was unlimited time for the employment of the various phases; everybody was present and ready to participate when needed - this eliminated all the practical difficulties that were experienced with the previous experiments in 'open' communities. This was an excellent opportunity to experiment with the medium for it provided a laboratory situation where the variables could be controlled. While the first experiment was limited, the second community drama enabled the author to exclude all the previous mistakes. It served as the community drama through which his ideas were finally consolidated.

What follows comprises two case studies based on the proceedings in these experiments. The first took place during the September school holidays in 1979 and the second during the April school holidays in 1980 :-

#### Community Drama at the Youth Leadership Camp (1)

The organisers of this Youth Camp (JAG) approached me to participate in their proceedings. Originally they wanted me to give a talk on community development, something related to the field of citizen involvement, or on leadership functioning in the community. Fortunately, they left the decision to me and requested me to take the responsibility for the programme, one evening at their camp. I thought about their suggestions and being provided with an open invitation, decided to use community drama to stimulate discussions at the camp. I was aware of the risk involved in this 'open' unstructured planning, but decided to take up this challenge.

### The Group

When the organisers contacted me to finalise arrangements for the evening, I requested to work with a group of 10 to 15 boys to do the preparatory work for the evening's performance. On my arrival I was met by the organisers and later introduced to the group of boys I was going to work with. They all belonged to the same subgroup. The rest of the group of about 60 boys were involved with other activities for the afternoon and we were left to carry on with the rehearsing.

My group had to complete their kitchen duty first and afterwards we gathered for the discussion. They called themselves the 'dragons' and showed signs of solidarity and cohesion in the group. They were all in the same age group ranging from 15 to 17 years of age.

### The Discussion

After I had been introduced to the group, I was left alone with them and started to ask them general questions such as their names and places of abode. Their motivation for participation in camp activities proved to be very high and they all seemed to enjoy what the camp had to offer. They visualised the camp as an opportunity to improve their own position. I identified the main leaders. The group was too big and did not allow for easy group discussion. As a result I subdivided them into two smaller groups consisting of five or six people.

Each group appointed its own leader and I asked them to discuss their experiences at the camp, their likes and dislikes. I also asked for their suggestions on improving the functioning of the camp. These topics were chosen as a result of the initial group discussion I had had the group before they were subdivided into the two separate groups.

I left these sub-groups to discuss the issues by themselves and when they indicated that they were finished, I joined the two groups again. I asked the group leaders to report back on the content of the discussions in the small groups and one of the main activities they reported on was the idea of standing guard. While the reporter discussed the activity, it drew much interest from his audience and I noticed that they all identified strongly with his narration. My next step was to ask him to show the group, with actions, what he was talking about.

He did this without a moment's hesitation. He knew exactly what he wanted to say, therefore he had no difficulty in saying it through dramatic action. After this demonstration, I asked some of the other boys to show their comment [i.e. make their comment upon] on the same activity and sounds of laughter and appreciation accompanied their performances.

I then proceeded by asking them whether they would like to demonstrate the other parts of their discussion as well, with the purpose of sharing their ideas with the rest of the camp. Upon this suggestion, the group responded enthusiastically and started to assemble their play.

At the initial stage, when the participants were still busy discussing the various scenes, one of the camp officials turned up and joined the group. He more or less invited himself to join in and I had to resist the temptation of asking him to leave. I was scared that he would disrupt the easy flow of ideas and would inhibit group participation. He started advising the group on acting techniques, such as not to act with their backs to the audience, to talk loudly and clearly, etc. He manoeuvred himself into a position where he took over the group discussion and when the issue of portraying his role was discussed, I asked him whether he would like to take part in the play himself. He probably understood what I really meant and left soon afterwards.

After the group discussion, I saw that the boys were ready to transfer their feelings into dramatic action. When I suggested it, they spontaneously reacted. The leaders in the groups assumed the roles of the organisers and informally they all made contributions in the group rehearsal, suggesting certain scenes. The narrator discussed these ideas and the group finally decided on a sequence of distinctive scenes.

The rest of the rehearsal went quite well. The group was left on its own and I noticed how they arranged the scenes so as to avoid unnecessary duplication in their performance. They also prepared the scenes chronologically and independently, and without any support from my side, they made the story flow.

When the rehearsal had been completed and before the members were asked to take up their duties in the kitchen, I called the group together once more. I asked them whether they saw their friends to be benefitting from their play and they answered in the affirmative. I then asked them whether they would like to hear



their comments afterwards and to discuss the issues with them the way we did it. Much to my surprise the answer came: 'You mean the way that you discussed these issues with us when you started?'.

After analysing their positive response, I realised that there could be two reasons for their positive reaction: they had used the method earlier during the camps, or, they were used to the idea as I had used it with them when I initiated the original discussion. When the drama was eventually performed, the narrator spontaneously initiated the audience discussion.

### Performance

The play took place in the same venue where the actors had rehearsed for the performance. The venue, of course, consisted of an army tent where they usually gathered for their meals, lectures and entertainment.

The actors were delayed because of their task in the kitchen. While the others gathered in the tent, we waited on them and they spontaneously started to sing their camp songs. At first they were hesitant, but as the singing increased in momentum, they became more inspired and this emotional feeling created a conducive atmosphere for the play.

The narrator introduced the play and I was able to watch the performance, standing right at the back of the tent observing the reaction of the audience. Throughout the play the audience was attentive, observing closely, sometimes making spontaneous remarks and laughing. It was clear that they were taking in what was being said. The play consisted of the following scenes :

1. A group of schoolboys is seen at school during interval. The principal has announced that JAG is organising a youth camp during the school holidays and now they are discussing the idea. In this scene the unrealistic expectations come through.
2. In the next scene they arrive at camp. They find the military style in which the camp is run as a great shock and try to accept the domineering manners of the sergeant major.
3. They are divided into smaller sub-groups and instructed to put up their tents.

4. in this scene they show supper time and how their behaviour is being modified. They are taught to stand in queues before the food is served, etc. Afterwards they portray the situation where they are supposed to stand guard, how they fall asleep while being on guard-duty and all the excitement that accompanies this.
5. Time for physical training, lead by the sergeant major.
6. Prayer time.
7. Leaving camp for home.

### Discussions

The narrator carried out his task expertly throughout the performance but experienced difficulty when he had to arrange the audience for their discussions. I assisted him in what proved to be an easy task. The audience spontaneously seated themselves with the members of their sub-groups and therefore the audience could easily be sub-divided into these smaller groups that had already existed. I asked them to elect discussion leaders in the group and not necessarily rely on the 'formal' leaders that had been selected when the camp commenced. (The organisers informed me after the play that they all elected new leaders for the discussion purposes.) The same discussion topics that I had used previously during the afternoon's initial discussions were utilised again.

During the feedback session, a lively debate was developed. They felt that they arrived at the camp without being adequately prepared on its functioning and nature; some of the boys thought that they would be trained to become 'prime ministers'. They also enjoyed the food and other activities, although some laughingly admitted that they were getting too much food! Generally they thought that the camp was tremendous and some indicated that they would try their utmost to attend the future camps as well.

### Evaluation

I feel that this has been my best experience with community drama to date. I think that there are

numerous contributing factors, with the main one being that I had the opportunity of working in a 'closed' community. Whether the same results would show in an 'open' community, must still be investigated. Furthermore, the boys who participated in the performance formed an ideal group to work with. They all belonged to the same subgroup. They underwent the same programme during the week that preceded the drama and, as a result, developed a strong sense of solidarity, leadership and other patterns of informal interaction.

The major shortcoming of this theatre was the fact that the organisers were not adequately prepared for the performance. They were the key to effective follow-up, but not all of them attended the performance. The others who did attend were also taken by surprise and could make a greater contribution during the discussion phase, at the end. If I ever were in a position again to do community drama at the Camp, I would certainly involve them through a discussion, before I commence with the rehearsal of the boys.

Looking back, I now realise that I should have had a discussion with them as well, before the play commenced. That way they would have been prepared for what they had seen. During the feedback session, the boys posed some questions and if they were prepared beforehand to expect such questions, they might have been in a position to provide sufficient answers. (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 1-4).

### Community Drama at the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (2)

During the April holidays in 1980, I was invited to do a second programme at the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys. Originally the camp organisers asked me to give a talk on 'how to start a club in the community' and they approved of the idea of community drama as a medium to convey the message.

### Preparations

An important part of my preparation for this project was to do a review of all the literature of community drama and community theatre. My main source of reference was my recordings of previous case studies,

and especially the work that I carried out at the previous Youth Camp.

I made every possible effort to contact the camp organiser and eventually managed to trace him telephonically two days before I was scheduled to go to the campsite. I discussed my programme with him and experienced difficulties in explaining myself clearly. He had attended my first community drama and therefore it was not too difficult for him to grasp what I was trying to say. He told me that he would discuss these ideas with the other leaders of the camp and that they would be ready with their ideas when I arrived on Wednesday morning.

### Discussion with the Organisers

I arrived at the Camp in time for breakfast and afterwards I met with them in one of the tents. I questioned the group's feelings and thoughts and asked how they felt about the idea of the proceedings being evaluated through dramatic action by the boys. One of the camp organisers indicated that they had planned to request written reports from the boys through which they could conduct their evaluation of the proceedings. They had hoped to initiate committees in all the areas the boys represent and it would be the task of these committees to carry on with the follow-up work.

We discussed the use of community drama as a means for evaluation and I explained that the performance and the discussion following the performance could lead to serious criticism. They accepted this idea "as long as it was constructive criticism". I enlarged on the nature and function of community drama and several ideas regarding the life in the camp were discussed in an effort to find a suitable topic.

During the discussion I mentioned to Mr. Brand (the leader of the organisers) that I would like to work with any of the subgroups at the camp. He undertook to "take you to the most outspoken group from whom you are expected to get a great response".

### Introduction to the Sub-group

When the camp organiser introduced me to the group, he requested them to "speak up" and not to "save"

me in any way. The group was generally very positive and accepted me from the start. I introduced myself and they provided me with their names, telling me where they came from. The main leader in the group stood out naturally, taking the lead in the discussions from the start.

### Group Discussions

I subdivided the group of eleven boys into two groups, and for discussion topics I asked them to share in their small groups the things they had enjoyed at the camp. I also asked them to comment on the activities they like and the things they did not enjoy. Almost immediately a lively discussion followed in these small groups. They were not inhibited at all. I asked them to select their own group leaders and told them that they would have to do the report-back at the end of their discussions. This they carried out spontaneously as well. I realised that my presence was not necessary any longer and left the tent!

After about 10 minutes I realised that they were ready to meet together and I asked the discussion leaders for the feedback. One of the matters that was raised was the issue of standing guard at night. They did this at the previous camp, but as it was not included in their programme, they suggested that it be reinstated. They also felt that their particular group had been discriminated against as they did not get the opportunity to do kitchen duty! (based on my own experiences I realised that this could be an important way of reaching the food in the kitchen!). They complained about the quality of the movies, that there was not enough recreation and games, and that everything was too one-sided for their liking. The physical training was not too popular and the fact that they had to attend all these activities created a prison-like atmosphere.

They recommended that more entertaining movies be shown, that programmes such as self-defence, sharp-shooting, visits of observation to factories and games at the seaside be included. Throughout this discussion I maintained a non-judgmental attitude, recognising all the contributions without actually taking sides.

### Formation of the Play

After this discussion I asked one of the group members to show the others how he experienced the situation when food is being served at the kitchen. This activity was based on an incident they had described to me earlier on during the discussions. He spontaneously engaged himself and then gathered all the others around, showing everybody what happened, much to the entertainment of the onlookers.

My next step was to ask the group whether they would like to demonstrate all these factors that were discussed, and to do it in the same way as they had just done the demonstration of the kitchen incident. This idea was taken up and they immediately started to rehearse. The leaders in the groups spontaneously assumed the roles of narrators and linked the various scenes. After some discussion and very little rehearsing, they decided on the following scenes :

1. Physical training at the camp;
2. Inspection of the tents;
3. Distribution of food at meal times;
4. The lecture on the planning of a mountaineering session;
5. The educational film show.

During the formation of the play, two of the camp's organisers joined, and observed the action. They abstained from participating in the actual preparation of the drama and the boys carried on with their rehearsal without being embarrassed in any way by their superiors' presence. When I was introduced to the group it was 9.10 a.m. and at 10.00 a.m. the group was ready with the play.

### The Performance

The natural venue for their drama was the one tent where the boys usually had their meals, received lectures and met for discussions. When the preparation for the play was completed, the 'actors' prepared the venue in no time. The tent had rows of chairs and tables and, with two tables in the front of the tent cleared, and the chairs shifted to the sides, the stage was set. No other equipment was necessary.

The narrator proved to be quite good and confidently carried out his performance, but forgot to tell the audience that the performance was going to be discussed afterwards. It looked as if he identified strongly with me and at one stage even included a scene where he portrayed 'Mr. Van Biljon'.

There were no inhibitions or embarrassment on the part of the actors. They acted the scenes naturally and did not need any props to tell their story. The scenes flowed quite smoothly without the interruption of any noises or long drawn-out silences. However, they did get carried away with some of the scenes and then the play was a bit drawn out. Between the various scenes the narrator was inclined to forget the sequence of the scenes. When this happened, the other actors supported him by way of whispering the necessary information.

Throughout the performance there was lively action and on the whole the play was quite entertaining. The story was done convincingly and they touched on real issues that were of interest to everybody in the audience. While the play was in action, and during the discussions afterwards, I observed the audience's reaction from where I stood, outside the tent.

#### Discussions after the Performance

As soon as the play was completed, the narrator asked the audience to discuss and evaluate in small groups, the message of the play. He asked them to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the camp and informed them on the report-back procedure. He also asked for recommendations.

At this stage there was some confusion as the groups did not really know what they were supposed to do. One of the camp organisers spontaneously supported the narrator and explained the message of the play to the audience. They did not know whether they were supposed to discuss the quality of the acting, or the message. I think that they were exposed to this method of discussing issues in small groups, at a previous occasion, for they automatically faced each other in their respective groups. The sub-groups must have been sitting together during the performance because there was no difficulty in organising them to form these groups.

### Report Back

After some discussions, the narrator asked the leaders to do the report-back. In most of the groups, the reports given were very positive at first. The narrator maintained a non-judgmental attitude and later on, as more and more groups reported, feelings were raised that had previously been suppressed. They developed the courage and confidence to express their feelings, to criticise and thus touched on serious issues that worried them. These issues related to the inconsistencies at the camp, as they experienced during the previous week.

One of these issues concerned an unpopular camp leader whose election as leader was based on his good performance the previous year. During the report-back, the boys shared their unhappiness about his arrogant attitude and complained that he acted in a domineering manner. This feeling of animosity was shared by the group en masse and various complaints were lodged against him. The person concerned felt the situation unbearable and left, although he had the ideal opportunity to share his side of the argument as well.

It was extremely interesting for me to observe how they needed the stimulation of the play to bring all these suppressed feelings to the surface through the discussion.

Gradually, as the groups reported back on the discussions that took place in their small groups, the issues raised represented more of their true feelings. Their initial reports tended to be over-positive and I gained the impression that they were not quite confident to say what they really thought and felt. All their reports sounded similar, all praising the virtues of the camp. However, after this 'formal' response, individuals started to comment on serious issues that troubled all of them.

The discussions that followed involved everybody, the camp organisers included. One of the leaders replaced the narrator who had to leave for kitchen duty. The group discussion took the form of a meeting with the new 'chairman' effectively channeling the various questions to the appropriate sources, allowing one person to speak at a time. Following the boys' accusations, the organisers were provided with the opportunity to share their ideas, thus establishing a lively dialogue and debate. The organisers cleared certain misinterpretations and generally explained their motivation for certain attitudes and programmes.



The fact that the contributions were channeled through the 'chairman' and that he maintained control over the situation, fostered smooth participation without any disruptive outbursts of emotion. The problems that bothered the group, their feelings and their frustrations, were being recognised and the order restored.

The discussions continued unabated without anybody wanting to leave the venue (except the one leader who felt too guilty). The discussion would probably have carried on even longer if lunch time had not called them to a halt.

### Meeting with the Organisers

I was invited for lunch with the organisers and during lunch one of the army officials (who did not participate in the proceedings) [asked me] "have you found good talent in the group?".

After the meal I met with the organisers in the same tent we used for our initial discussions. They all seemed to be positive about what they had seen and agreed that the play stimulated a discussion that they never had during their programmes. They also felt that constructive dialogue between them and the boys was established - now they knew how the boys felt. Mr. Brand evaluated the tremendous participation by the audience and said that involvement always ensures a successful programme. He continued to say "we saw the child within the child today", referring to the fact that the boys showed their real feelings and attitudes.

We discussed the practical suggestions that were raised by the boys and he explained to me how the camps are organised. Not all the people who decide the programme were present, but Mr. Brand himself was one of them. He intends to do the follow-up work and to raise the ideas when the next camp is planned. He also felt that valid criticisms were lodged that could be quite useful.

### Evaluation of the Community Drama

1. If somebody wants to utilise the medium of community drama, it is important that he must be well prepared and know what he is doing.

I was well prepared for this performance and, therefore, I was able to do it successfully. However, the message came from the specific situation ... I was only prepared to use the technique.

2. On arrival, I had a discussion with all the organisers and because of this discussion, the organisers actively and spontaneously participated in the discussions that followed the play. This was quite a breakthrough compared with the organisers' passive behaviour the previous year. Through this I learned that it is imperative, especially in these conditions, to involve the organisers. They were prepared for what they could expect and therefore they did not feel threatened when being criticised. They co-operated spontaneously in the discussions after the play, as their status was enhanced. They were recognised for their leadership and supported in their capacity as organisers of the camp.
3. Ideally, I should be part of the organisation of this camp. This way I can ensure that the ideas that were raised are carried through. Another alternative would be for one of the organisers to learn to apply this technique. If the technique does not carry the necessary 'status', it will always be considered as 'another programme to occupy the boys!' This superficiality will eventually show through and then the boys might be reluctant to participate on a future occasion.
4. The main limitation of this community drama was the fact that there was not enough time to discuss the goal with the actors. This was especially evident through the narrator's omission to mention it.
5. The small-group discussions with the actors before the play were very important for the following reasons :
  - a. They allowed for a free and lively discussion.
  - b. They taught them the method of small-group discussion thereby making it easier for the narrator to move naturally from the 'play stage' to the 'discussion stage'.
6. It is vitally important for the change agent, i.e. myself, to be in the background. It is essential that he should not make himself noticeable, otherwise the audience will not perceive the ideas as those of the actors, and in this way the

credibility of the message is decreased. The change agent 'retires' the minute the 'actors' are ready for the play.

7. At first I thought that the idea of follow-up after the camp could be included in the play. Although the 'actors' were asked to discuss it at the initial group discussions, nobody was really interested in discussing that topic. This shows again that you cannot push the group into discussing a theme that they are not ready for; they will only discuss the issues that are most relevant to them - those maintaining the highest priority on their scale of interest.

Furthermore, this meant that one theme was followed through in the play and in that sense communication was very strong. This camp was mostly camp-orientated and, therefore, the idea of follow-up was irrelevant at this stage.

8. This community drama has resulted in 'mass therapy'. 'En masse' problems which the whole group experienced were worked through. It is debatable whether this kind of lively dialogue and communication would have been possible without stimulation of the play. But, more important, this performance has proved the importance of the communication that can be established and in this respect the play took second place.
9. One of the most important results of the performance was the dialogue established between the audience and the policymakers. In this case, the decision-makers were involved before the time and, therefore, they were prepared to join in and support discussion. This is not always possible, especially in open communities as the policymakers are not in a position to attend.
10. During the discussion period, after the play, the actors did not have to have all the answers. Their role was to stimulate and encourage participation and in this way they served as catalysts. In a way, they are a mirror and reflect the audience's own view and feelings in a dramatic manner. As mentioned earlier, they do not have to have answers, but, the suggestions and questions which do come up, should be followed up and worked through by the people with the real power.
11. The comment made during lunch time regarding the talent of the actors was remarkable. This refers to the idea and attitude of uninformed people regarding community drama. An uninformed person

made this remark, whereas none of the other organisers or boys involved even hinted in that direction.

12. It is remarkable that there is a certain natural resistance to the use of this technique. People feel too threatened to use this technique although they have observed all the steps and recognized the validity of it. However, if they could allow themselves to try it once and carry on trying it, they would build up the necessary confidence, knowledge and skill to use it with ease.
13. The formation of this play took only 45 minutes. This camp set-up was a rather artificial community, but nevertheless it proved that it is really very easy to put together a community drama.
14. Generally it is important to be aware of the fact that this camp is an artificial community. For community drama purposes, it has advantages in that everybody is there, actors, audience and the decision-makers. From a practical point of view, they could be involved at the right time without delays caused by practical problems. In 'open' communities it is not so easy, and many times a practical problem makes the smooth running and the usefulness of the medium almost impossible.
15. During the feedback, it took the boys some time to break through the barrier from reporting on 'what ought to be'. As the momentum built up, they shared more and more pertinent issues. This emphasises the importance of having enough time and therefore, for the play to be effective, it must be kept as short as possible so that all the energy and interest is not canalised into dramatic action only. The play should be seen as a tool for the discussion and for the enhancement of dialogue afterwards. (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 1-9).

On the basis of these two case studies, the author was in a position to forward to the organisers of the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys a copy of his evaluations of the technique as well as a comprehensive evaluation of the organisation of the camp. It is excluded from this

case study as it does not have direct relevance to the research topic.

#### 2.4.2 Community Drama at a Training Course

The author also employed the medium at the final session of a Training Course for Crèche Management Members. This training course was organised and carried through by the author and Mrs. M. Arendse, employed by Grassroots Trust, an organisation which sponsors many of the pre-school centres in the geographic area where the author operated as a community social worker. The course was attended by members of these schools as well as people from the management committees which were under the jurisdiction of the author.

The development of the experiment is described in the following case study. The experiment did not meet the organiser's expectations, but it served an important function and showed the necessity for following the various steps in the introduction and preparation phases of community drama. The author is indebted to the assistance provided by Mrs. Arendse in this project. Her evaluative thinking and active contributions proved to be of great help to the author especially when the community drama was carried out :-

## Community Drama at the Crèche Management Training Course

This community drama was carried out on the last session of a training course for crèche managements. It formed part of the course and, therefore, it is important to provide more background on this first.

### Background

Crèches, or Day Care Centres for pre-school children, are often administered by voluntary Management committees. People elected on these committees are often emotionally over-involved with the prospect of 'caring for children in need', and they do not always realise that they need to apply management principles if they want to be successful. The functions and duties of the management committee members are usually explained in the constitutions, but this is often ignored. While some members may fulfil their tasks efficiently, others find it difficult to come to grips with basic things such as 'how to be a chairman, secretary or treasurer,' or how to run a meeting.

In my experience, I realised that it is quite difficult to assist these committee members who experience problems. I realise that the answer did not lie in my suggestions, and realised they had to undergo a complete change of attitude regarding management before they could expect their projects to improve. To bring about this complete change of mind is not easy.

To provide continuous education to committee members I organised a training course with Mrs. Monica Arendse, a member of the Grassroots Pre-School Trust. Mrs. Arendse experienced similar problems with the management committees that she was responsible for and, therefore, we decided to join forces. The training course stretched over five sessions taking place on successive Monday evenings.

### Objectives of the Course

1. To provide committee members with the necessary education that would enable them to fulfil their roles effectively.

2. To conduct the course in such a way that the members would be provided with practical experience for their tasks.
3. To provide a learning experience for everybody and to broaden their horizons and scope through mixing with members of various committees from different communities.
4. Through the course and the follow-up of continuing education, enhance local leadership in the communities.

### Curriculum

The curriculum was finalised at the first session by the 'directors' and the members. It was as follows :

- (a) Finance: the role of the treasurer, teacher and committee members; fund-raising and the parent teachers association; legislation regarding the financial aspect (legislation affecting the administration of Nursery Schools was also discussed); other agencies involved with fund raising.
- (b) Administration: the roles of the office bearers - chairman, secretary and treasurer, role of the supervisor (matron); the constitution; the parent teacher association; the PTA and Management Committee relationship; the Annual General Meeting.
- (c) General: the use of a diary; importance and practical implications of home visiting; referral of problem cases.

This curriculum covered a wide area and generally only introduced certain ideas to the members. The course was too short to cover all the relevant aspects and the organisers aimed at stimulating the members, making them aware of their roles and responsibilities.

### Standard Programme

The programme was designed to ensure maximum participation of all the members and followed a certain procedure :

1. The proceedings of the evening were usually opened by the officials who were elected at the previous meeting. They would hold a short, formal meeting and would finalise all the practical arrangements of the course.
2. An election officer would take control and carry out the proceedings for the election of a new committee. The newly elected committee take their seats immediately afterwards. The new chairman hands the meeting over to the directors who introduce the educational programme for the evening.
3. Tea is served while the chairman concludes the meeting. Afterwards the directors evaluate the proceedings of the evening.

#### Motivation for the Use of Community Drama

The directors decided to employ community drama as they felt that it would be a practical way of showing the committee members how much they had internalised during the course. The course was too short to allow for enough time to discuss their individual problems with their management functioning and, therefore, it was hoped that the community drama would provide an outlet in this direction.

The directors further arranged that a video recording be made of the drama. The benefit would then be twofold :

1. By replaying it to the group, they would benefit by seeing themselves in action;
2. It was also envisaged that the committee members could show these recordings at their PTA meetings thus extending their knowledge to the other people as well.

#### The Community Drama

The proceedings of the evening were delayed by thirty minutes as the group had to wait on the people from Hout Bay, who experienced difficulties with their transport. I helped the man from the video resource centre to put up his equipment and explained the cause of the delay to the group. By 8.10 p.m.



I could not wait any longer and we decided to commence with the programme. The treasurer took the chair as both the chairman and secretary were still absent. The awaited group turned up at the end of this meeting, just in time for the election of the new officials.

### Preparation for the Drama

During the course we often made use of tasks, i.e. written pre-prepared questionnaires were handed out for the groups to explore. In these sessions the members carried out their tasks successfully, without them asking for much further explanation. I tried to stimulate community drama the same way on the last session of the course and hoped that the members would be able to develop a dramatic presentation of their ideas, after handing them some task sheets. The prescribed problems were similar to those issues they experienced in their office of service and similar to the topics we covered during the course.

The group of 20 was subdivided into two equal groups and each group was handed one task sheet. On it, a hypothetical case was described, relating directly to the problems they experienced in their management committee meetings. These sheets also included the characteristics of the characters each participant had to portray.

The first group was asked to portray a crèche management committee where all the usual problems and conflicts occurred. The second group was also provided with the information the first group received and was asked to prepare an 'answer' to the first act. While the 'problematic' group prepared their performance, the second group prepared their 'dramatic answer' which was to follow as soon as the first group had finished. They had to observe the first group closely and adapt their answer to their observations, thus providing alternatives to the 'problems' portrayed.

The task sheet of Group B read as follows :

You are all members of a Crèche Management Committee. All of you have specific roles to play within this committee. The committee is not functioning very well because :

1. The Management Meetings are unorganised;
2. The officials do not know what is expected of them in their roles and as a result there is tremendous confusion in the meetings;
3. There is bad communication between the Management and the PTA and the latter feel that they are only used as fundraisers. Their feelings are not taken into account;
4. The teacher complains that she receives no support from the management committee and they rely on her to do all the work;
5. There are no staff meetings at the school, with the result that staff problems create conflict and suspicion;
6. The two outside agencies, who are advising the committee, are at loggerheads and the result is that the committee is torn between two loyalties.

Task: Divide your group so that you all have a role to play. Decide among yourselves who is going to be :

1. Chairman
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Teacher
5. Worker from one agency
6. Worker from another agency
7. Other members
8. PTA Chairman
9. Narrator.

With the above mentioned in mind, show us what happens with this management.

On the sheet, space was then left for the suggestions and then for the action decided upon.

### Discussion of the Task Sheets

Each group received one task sheet and this caused much confusion, they could not decide who should read the instructions, whether they should pass it around, and how they would carry out the task. They certainly were quite familiar with the situations but did not seem to be able to carry out the request

for enactment. We noticed their ambivalence and continually encouraged them to understand the issues.

Because of the limited time, the directors decided to move into the performance phase, with the participants still uncertain regarding their roles they had to portray. The 'bad' committee had the most difficulty and could not understand why they should show how bad things can go when they have attended the course with the purpose of improving on their roles!

### The Performance

The first roleplay resulted in a dialogue between the actors. The only person who managed to dramatise some of their feelings was a lady who had had previous experiences in community drama.

The second group knew that they had to reply to what they were watching, with the result that they observed attentively. I also noticed that they met informally, to discuss and prepare their presentation. Remarks of agreement and disagreement further typified their participation.

The first group's performance reached a climax and I terminated their presentation through an applause. The second group joined in and then the two groups changed roles. The second group was far more excited about portraying their feelings and eagerly arranged themselves on stage. During their performance, they tried to correct the mistakes the first group made, and portrayed the alternatives for Management Committee functioning.

With the second roleplay, there was again very little dramatic action involved and their presentation consisted of a formal management committee meeting. They tried their best to make a proper job of it, but the 'chairman' struggled in his role and had to be assisted by the narrator.

I terminated their presentation in the same way as the first performance and asked the groups to get together to discuss the performance. The two chairmen acted as the mediators for their respective groups and I allowed them to carry on with the discussions by themselves.

### The Discussion

I informed the participants about the discussion and asked them whether they would like to meet in two separate groups to discuss the outcome of the play. They preferred not to do this. The general feeling was that they did not want to miss out on any of the comments made by the other members. I think that they were scared that somebody might have said something against them without them being present to defend themselves.

The groups struggled at first to discuss relevant issues with the discussion slowly gaining momentum. Later on virtually all the members participated and raised pertinent, often delicate, issues concerning the functioning of the management committees of their own crèches. The discussion was extraordinarily intense, everybody was closely absorbed and, had we had the time, the discussion could easily have been prolonged till late. Unfortunately, the discussion had to be terminated for the hostesses were ready to serve the meal that they had prepared for the evening.

### Video Recording

The video recording that was made of their performances was replayed during the tea break and the members eagerly observed their own action on television. They were totally unfamiliar to the idea of their being on television, were not inhibited at all.

### Evaluation

1. This community drama took place at the end of the course and the members had all been exposed to a period of intensive training. They were the ideal group to be used for community drama. There was a sense of group identity and group solidarity among the members. They also shared the same needs and ideas.
2. The performance did not impress dramatically but it was successful in the sense that it motivated the audience to discuss their individual problems. In this case, it would be presumptuous to think that it is only community drama that could stir this kind of action. In fact, a powerful speech or any other activity might have had the same effect.

3. However, it is interesting that, although the dramatic quality of the performance was virtually nil, it did capture the attention of the audience and stimulated the group to participate in an intense discussion. This roleplay, although limited, had the desired effect of any other community drama and no 'better' dramatic production could have improved on the quality of dialogue that was achieved.
4. The idea of putting the tasks on the sheets did not work, especially not the way it was presented. The groups were confused as to who should read the information on the task sheets. The groups were too large and the one sheet of paper was insufficient. Moreover, the tasks suggested to the groups all the problems and issues that they were supposed to have brought forward themselves.

The groups experienced difficulty in their interpretation of the tasks. With only one tasksheet per group, they did not know how to share the information and we had to assist them continuously in helping them to understand what was expected of them. These issues correlated closely with their own feelings (as perceived throughout the course), but without their coming to the awareness themselves, they did not identify with the situation or the characters as described on the tasksheets. They might have recognised themselves in the said situation, but lacked motivation to enact the behaviour. Although these descriptions were carefully selected, and corresponded with the ideas of the participants, the problems on the sheets remained 'somebody else's' and were not sufficient to motivate spontaneous dramatisation.

5. If the two directors acted as the discussion leaders, discussing the task step-by-step, all the phases might have been covered and then they probably would not have had so much difficulty in portraying these characters in the very known situation. In this experiment I realised once again how important it is to go through all the necessary steps when community drama is envisaged. All the variables were favourable and the fault lay in this area.
6. The first performance was largely 'saved' by the one member who had been involved in community drama previously. Fortunately the others did not know this, otherwise they could have felt inhibited.

7. The playback technique worked very well. During their initial discussion, the second group had the opportunity of getting together first to plan and then, during the performance of the first group, they could observe and watch while the others performed. The first group had to start and the second group found it much easier because they had the chance of preparing themselves while the others were struggling.
8. Community drama certainly served its purpose with this experiment - it showed the truth about a common community issue. This was evident when the second group tried to portray the 'good' meeting. Although they had time to prepare themselves for the task, the chairman was still not in a position to carry out the role successfully. I was a bit disappointed at the time but later realised that it was actually a very positive incident. The problems experienced at crèche management meetings are felt by most of the members who were present. The course was too short to ensure thorough learning. During the presentation, while they had difficulty in 'doing it the right way', they could see a realistic situation. This should motivate them to continue with their education and to work continually on the improvement of their managements. (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 1-8).

#### 2.4.3 Community Drama with Girls

The last case study is a record of an experiment carried out by the author at the St. George's Home for Girls.

The author regards it as the most complete record of the proceedings with a community drama and wishes to express his thanks to the social worker and the principal of the Home for allowing him to carry out the experiment and assisting him with their co-operation. The experiment was preceded by a discussion with the social worker at the home, Robyn Riddle, earlier that year, when the

author investigated the possibility of using community drama at the institution. During this planning stage, they could not agree on a suitable date with the result that the performance was postponed.

### Community Drama at St. George's Home for Girls

I came to know the principal of the children's home through my contact with one of the girls, whose parents were under my care as a statutory caseworker. As a result of the problems we had with the girl, I had several discussions with her and the social worker at the Home. I saw the Home to be an ideal opportunity for using the medium of community drama as it has the attributes of a closed community. I also knew the resident social worker who attended a workshop on community theatre. We discussed the possibility of employing the medium at the Home and evaluated the topics in which drama could be employed. This first experiment did not materialise as there was no guarantee that there would be adequate time for the employment of all the phases.

During the school holidays I contacted the social worker again and we arranged to include the experiment in the informal holiday programme that she had organised for the residents.

### Preparation for the Community Drama

The initial arrangements for the community drama were made telephonically and I explained the following to the social worker :

In terms of the time needed for the programme, I required -

- 9.30 - 9.45 for the discussion with the principal and other authority figures
- 9.45 - 10.30 to prepare the 'actors' for their performances
- 10.30 - 11.00 this time would be needed for the performance
- 11.00 - 12.00 was the time envisaged to have the discussions.

She mentioned that the girls were concerned about their future and felt insecure in terms of their rights as residents of the Home. This feeling was sparked off by one of the girls who was transferred and they were scared that they would have to leave as well if they misbehaved. They were keen to leave the Home, but the outside world was unfamiliar to them and, as a result, they were scared of an uncertain future. Most of the girls have a low educational standard and the employment situation posed further threats.

I asked her to discuss the issue with the principal and if possible the other house mothers so that they would be prepared to attend the performance and the discussions I envisaged holding. I also stressed the fact that she was not to mention the word 'drama' or 'theatre' to anybody. She followed my advice and the programme was advertised on the Home's noticeboard as 'Archie's Programme'. She also had to allocate a group of 6 - 8 girls who could be the 'actors'.

#### Discussion with the Social Worker

When I arrived at the Home, I discussed the programme with Robyn (the social worker). She told me that she had tried to keep the girls busy during the holiday period, and a fully organised programme was envisaged for the longer holidays. All the girls were not in the Home at the time, as some were out during the holidays. She experienced difficulty in communicating with them as they had difficulty in verbalising their needs.

As a possible theme for the community drama she suggested that the girls might be interested in talking about their future plans. She provided the names of eight girls whose ages varied between 14 and 17 years. They were reasonably close friends as they all represented the older group of girls in the Home. I requested a private venue to work with these adolescents and Robyn was at first confused as she was under the impression that I would start with the preparation in the same venue as envisaged (was envisaged) for the performance. I explained that I would require a room with enough space to improvise, but small enough to foster a close group feeling. We then arranged that I would make use of the adjacent office for the preparation and that the performance would take place in the lounge which is regularly used by the residents for relaxing, to play games and watch television.



### Discussion with the Principal

The principal of the Home joined in the discussion and I briefly explained to her the methodology to be employed. Mrs. Cedras (the principal) was very keen and interested in the idea and suggested, as a possibility for the theme, the girls' relationship with the opposite sex. She explained that the girls are concerned about their relationships with their boyfriends and they were often confused as to "how far they could allow them to go". She explained: "the girls approached me with this problem and as I am often involved with other chores, I miss out on an opportunity to discuss it thoroughly".

### Preparation with the 'Actors'

I left the discussion and waited for the group in the office that was allocated for the preparation phase of the community drama. Robyn called for the girls and they entered the room singly. We waited for about five minutes and I only started once they were all seated. I introduced myself and mentioned that the purpose for my discussion would become clearer as we proceed with the programme. I asked them their names and then I asked them about the school activities and life in the Home. I then introduced the idea of their future and asked them whether they knew what they were going to do once they had to leave the security of the Home. Generally there was not much response and I realised that there was complete uncertainty regarding this topic.

I decided to change the subject and asked whether anyone had a boyfriend. This question was met with giggles from most of the group members and the group pointed to the girl who told us about her boyfriend in Port Elizabeth. During the discussion that followed, the group suggested that it was important to get to know several guys before making the final choice. I then asked the group, "If you can select one issue that you would like to talk to me about, what would your choice be?". On hearing this there was some confusion and I realised that the two topics appealed to the two sub-groups that were formed already. I continued, "Okay, if you would like we can form two groups, the one group can meet in this corner and the other group can meet on the other side of the room". The girls moved into two circles. I explained that their discussions had to be recorded by one of their group members and one person would have to report on a summary of the outcome of their discussions.

The groups started their discussions hesitantly. I assisted them to turn their chairs in such a way that they could see each other. Their whispering gradually made way for a louder discussion and after about ten minutes I noticed that they had quietened down, and were looking expectantly in my direction. They were ready for the report back. I asked them to remain seated in their small circles, only to turn their chairs to form a bigger circle.

The 'future' group did not have much of a report-back and merely listed the kind of occupations they can go into once they have completed their education. I realised that this idea would not be feasible for dramatisation as their future was like a dark cloud. Before they could dramatise it, they would need more guidance and training as regards the variables associated with the topic.

The second group responded actively and their reporter provided us with a detailed description of their discussion. She stressed the importance for a girl to be selective in her choice of boyfriends. I could foresee the advantages in enacting this subject as most of the members were involved and concerned with the issue. I continued to probe and asked more questions. I noticed that the reporter's body language changed from being reserved and, without her realising it, she started to act out her narration. When I was satisfied that they had a clear picture of the theme, I asked the narrator to demonstrate her narrations. She replied, "Do you want me to act?" and my reply was, "Yes, show us what you have just described to the group".

Her immediate reaction was that of slight embarrassment, but once she gathered her thoughts, she was all keen. I asked the second group whether they wanted to join but they preferred to observe. The reporter of the first group spontaneously assumed the role of group organiser and started to allocate roles to the girls. I suggested that one girl act [could pretend] as the boyfriend; she was at first reluctant to assume this role, but eventually made an attempt to portray this boy. After some rehearsing, they decided that another girl would act in this role and the girl I had appointed opted out.

After they had shown me their play, I asked them whether they would like to do the performance with the other residents watching them. Again their first reaction was that of embarrassment. To overcome their ambivalent feelings, I arranged: "Okay, you decide on it while I leave the room. See how you want to do the play; if you want to do it in front

of others, we can arrange it, otherwise you do not have to if you do not feel confident about it. I'll be back in 10 minutes, then you can show me what you have decided".

With this last remark, I left the room, closed the door and discussed the situation with the social worker over a cup of tea. We decided that we would give them time to prepare themselves and only if they felt ready for the performance we would gather the other girls to watch the performance.

I entered the group after about 15 minutes and found them to be all keen and ready for the performance. I told the narrator that I would like the audience to participate with discussions after their performance and asked her whether she would be able to divide them into smaller groups for discussion purposes. She approved of this idea and seemed to be quite keen about the prospect of organising the audience. The social worker gathered the other girls and we took our seats with the principal and houseparents in the back row of the lounge.

### Performance

I was disappointed at the first sight of the audience as it consisted only of some 15 girls, all much younger than the actors. The 'actors' were at first reluctant to appear 'on stage' and gathered at the entrance of the lounge nervously exchanging ideas about the performance. Eventually the narrator persuaded them to enter and proceeded by introducing the 'actors' to the audience. She referred to each girl individually and explained to the audience the role that she was to portray in the drama.

The stage consisted of the front section of the lounge. On stage there were four easy chairs, a small coffee table and enough space to allow for free improvisation. These props allowed the 'actors' to improvise without being in the way of their dramatisation.

The drama did not consist of any formally separated scenes and basically the performance took place in one act, with the narrator interpreting the story vaguely before the play commenced. The storyline was as follows: A girl (1) meets a boy that she has a liking for and he asks her to accompany him to a disco. Present at this dance is the girlfriend (2)

of girl (1). The boy fetches the girl (1) at her parents' house where he is introduced to the father, mother and grandparents. They ask him some general questions and he does not make a favourable impression because of his unstable ways.

The couple leaves for the disco where they start dancing. After they have left, the family meets again to discuss the reasons for their dislike of the boyfriend (1). At the disco, the boyfriend asks the girl (1) to have sex with him. He tells her that he loves her and argues that if she loves him too she would show it by allowing him to sleep with her. The girl refuses and tells him to leave her alone saying that "she is not that type of girl". Girl (2) is also at the disco and when this boy propositions her soon after, she goes along with him quite readily as she feels she has to show her liking for him in this way.

At the disco, girl (1) meets another friend who shows better manners and eventually she introduces him at home too. This chap receives a better welcome as it turns out that he is a much better proposition as a stable boyfriend. He is hard working, God-fearing and everything else that is good and proper. The fact that his father is a minister of religion completely tips the scales in his favour. Their performance terminates once the family has completed their discussion on the new boyfriend.

### The Audience Involvement

Throughout the performance the audience was very keen and interested in what was being portrayed. They laughed at some of the lines and generally seemed to have understood the message. At the completion of the performance, the narrator confidently divided them into smaller groups and explained to them the procedure of the discussions. The 'actors' did not participate in these discussions and the principal, housemothers and I also gathered in our own group to discuss the play.

The report back from the audience did not bring much reaction and generally was restricted on the story line. Once the three reporters had done their bit, I asked the principal if she would like to contribute as well. She moved to the front and emphasised the message of the play.

### Group Discussion with Principal, Housemothers and Social Worker

I met privately with the principal, the housemothers and the social worker afterwards and in our discussion they mentioned the following: the girls portrayed their honest feelings quite openly. They showed that they hold healthy values and, although they were all part of a children's Home, they depicted the ideal home situation with parents and grandparents. Generally, they were taken by surprise that the participants acted the way they did, as they thought they would have been inhibited.

The principal felt because the message of the play came over strongly. To her the girls effectively dramatised that they realised that they would not be ostracised for upholding their moral values and that there are alternative friends with better values available. She also felt that they showed what they had been taught in the Home as she and her husband always encouraged the girls to introduce their partners to them, stressing the importance of selecting friends carefully.

The general feeling was that the drama was very valuable as it proposed a certain set of values which the girls might be more prepared to uphold in future. They decided on these values themselves; they represented them to the others spontaneously and, therefore, they avoided the idea being imposed by the principal. Through talking openly on a delicate subject, it also had therapeutic value.

The principal commented that the drama showed the way for further follow-up work. In her discussions the drama could serve as a helpful base to refer to, when talking with the girls about this topic. They felt that the girls who were away on holiday had missed out on an important event, especially as the medium allowed for maximum participation.

### Evaluation with the Social Worker

After the group meeting, I evaluated the proceedings with the social worker and an edited version of our conversation reads as follows: A refers to me and B refers to the social worker :

A : Robyn, now that you've seen the community drama, how do you feel about it?

- B : I must say that I feel very positive about it now. As you know, I am not a person madly interested in drama and theatre, and therefore I was very suspicious of the medium.
- A : Have you changed your mind then?
- B : Yes. I was very sceptical that the girls might not be able to act out their feelings in front of the other residents. I observed their behaviour and responses in the couple of group meetings that I had with them and I must admit they were pretty passive. I had very little response from them.
- A : I was a little bit surprised myself to see them portraying their roles realistically and without any inhibitions.
- B : Although I feel more confident about the use of the medium, I am still not sure how you managed to get them to put together their show in 45 minutes. I mean, you did not know them from Adam, you did not know the conditions in the Home and yet you persuaded them to do something that they would otherwise be very reluctant to do. How is that possible?
- A : Very simple. I followed a sequence of steps. Firstly, when I met them and talked about their interests, I had, at the same time, in the back of my mind, a good idea of what they would like to talk about. I focussed on these common issues and I divided them into smaller groups for discussion purposes.
- B : Can you explain to me why you did that?
- A : Robyn, I ~~felt that~~ the small groups ~~were~~ excellent because they allow the members the freedom to discuss issues ~~in~~ their own time. At the initial stage of the discussion, they were still very much inhibited and through this discussion they started to warm up. Simultaneously, they also learned how to employ the method and this gave the narrator the lead and enabled her to organise the post-play discussions.
- B : You talk about the narrator, what do you mean by that?
- A : I call the narrator the person who takes the lead in the play. In this case the narrator showed herself naturally already when her sub-

group gave their report in the pre-performance discussion. She assumed a leading role all through the preparation phase.

B : I think that it might be easier for me to employ the medium as I know the girls so well.

A : No, it is crucial, even although you might know the participants, never to assume that they will dramatise an issue spontaneously. You will always have to start where they are. Ensure that they are keen and interested in the subject. Then encourage them to dramatise the basic story amongst themselves and only then can it be suggested that they do it in front of others.

B : In the performance they did not mention their uncertainty about the future. What happened to that idea?

A : I realised at the report back, in the initial discussion, that they needed far more insight and information on this specific topic. They were just not ready for it and I decided to leave it right there. I think that this very fact could give you an indication of their confusion regarding their future, and if you could follow it up, it will be to their advantage. Once, after a training programme where they have learnt about the job interview, how to approach somebody if you look for board and lodging and so on, they will be in a position to enact it.

B : When did they decide to enact in front of the bigger audience?

A : After I had observed their play. In fact, I made a grave mistake myself when I asked one of the girls to portray the role of the boy. She was not keen to do so, and eventually somebody else portrayed that role. At that moment I realised, once again, that I had to withhold my contributions. I decided to leave them to do their own thing.

B : When you came for the cup of tea we were both dubious whether they would actually show the courage to carry through. We were already seated when I still had my doubts. I was also surprised that you were not in front, trying to help them to sort out their ideas. I mean, you sat calmly next to me and allowed them to carry on all by themselves.

- A : Exactly. You see, I have come to accept the fact that the group can be trusted completely, once they have reached the stage where they are motivated to communicate their message to the audience. They take some time to get over the first shock of appearing on stage. Once this fear has been overcome, they tend to be spontaneous and uninhibited.
- B : The narrator did a lot to get the ball rolling. Do you know that she is actually studying to be a teacher? She has more confidence than the others and that might have helped her in the way she carried out her role. I noticed that she whispered the lines to the other actors who were inclined to forget their lines.
- A : The girl that pleasantly surprised me was the one portraying the 'ouma'. Do you know that she was very shy about contributing whilst practising in my presence? At first she was not even going to participate, and on stage she was most popular with the audience, as her lines drew much laughter and reaction.
- B : I can appreciate that she was reserved in your discussion for we know her to be like that. It was a valuable experience for her to participate in the play and helped her to gain confidence.
- A : I was generally very pleased with their performance. The play held the same message as the one they originally discussed in my presence, however, they really turned the idea into a spontaneous enactment that was varied, entertaining and very stimulating.
- B : It is a pity that all the girls were not there as I think that they really missed out on something quite interesting. The young ones did benefit as before long they will also be teenagers.
- A : If we had a different audience we would have had much more discussions. With other experiments I observed that the participants tend to be shy and may resort to ideas that they know would be acceptable with the audience. Through an on-going discussion they eventually share views that might otherwise be taboo. A healthy situation can then develop whereby the group moves beyond the superficial, and discusses these issues that are otherwise never talked about. If our audience were on the same level as the 'actors',



I presume that the same could have happened. They enacted what they knew would be 'acceptable' With ongoing discussions hidden doubts and feelings are verbalised.

B : I noticed that you were flexible with the arrangement of your allocation of time.

A : Yes, but I must admit, to me it felt as if things were going too slowly. I really had to discipline myself as I knew that the Home has its own routine and anyway, there was enough time allocated for extensive discussions.

### Conclusion

One week after the programme I made contact with the social worker in order to discover what response the girls had to the event. She said: "the girls were very happy about having been involved, and that afternoon even approached me to ask whether you would be coming again to work with them in this way. They were very disappointed to hear that you would not be coming: It seemed to play a meaningful part in their lives as they seemed much less apathetic for the rest of the day and the following day - quite a treat for teenagers".

This case study proved to some extent that community drama is an effective communication medium. The fact is that working with adolescents, encouraging them to communicate, is always difficult but with this medium they were able to put their message across to the audience as well as to strengthen it in their own minds (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1981b, i-xviii).

THE ENABLER - AGENT FOR COMMUNITY DRAMA3.1 DRAMA AND THEATRE IN COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK

The author is under the impression that social workers are generally none too keen to experiment with drama and theatre within the context of community social work.

This notion was reinforced at a workshop organised by the Society for Social Workers on Community Theatre held at the Early Learning Centre, Athlone, on 26 July 1980. Here the author gained the impression that social workers underestimated the value of roleplaying and were generally ignorant of the value and use of sociodramatic techniques.

At this workshop, community theatre and community drama were introduced to a variety of social workers, students, and professionals in other related disciplines, and to most of the participants, the ideas were either new or not well known and thus received a mixed response. Here it became clear that the social workers' interest, training background, and experiences were the main pointers which determined particular attitudes. The author observed that, although there were several people expressing their interest in the medium at the workshop, not many actually went on to experiment with it within the context of their own work.

The author maintains that persons interested in the theatre, and with some experience of drama, would be more likely to employ the method. At Cafda, various social workers were exposed to the medium, yet in the course of discussions they expressed lack of interest in traditional theatre and drama as the main reason for their ambivalence towards the medium. The author ascribes his own involvement with community drama partly to his personal interest and experience in traditional theatre and drama.

Although an understanding and knowledge of traditional theatre, drama techniques, or theatre training might serve as a stimulator for the social worker to participate in the medium, it could also serve as a hindrance. Kidd and Byram explain: "Extension workers and participants get fascinated with the medium and tend to forget its social change objectives. This often results in a disproportionate emphasis on theatre as a product, rather than theatre as a tool for social transformation" (1978, 175).

Interest in the theatre and drama may precipitate involvement with the medium, but the author believes that this specific interest is not essential for effective employment of community drama in community social work. In community drama, the form the play takes depends on the quality of interaction amongst the 'actors'. Social workers are trained and generally equipped to enhance

the quality of interaction that is essential in the introduction and preparation phase. For this reason, the author believes that it is within the reach of social workers to employ the method and, with the necessary added knowledge about the specific characteristics of community drama, such employment of the medium should merely be seen as an extension of their knowledge on group dynamics. ✓

Another possibility for the facilitation of community drama could result from the collaboration of social worker and theatre person (drama teacher, actor, or director). Social workers might lack the artistic skills and technical background of the artist while the artist may be ill-equipped to channel the motivation aroused through the theatre. The author discussed this idea<sup>1</sup> with drama teacher Nadia Razis and it was agreed that a prerequisite for such teamwork would be a thorough understanding by both parties of the objectives of the medium. The author has not been involved in a project of this nature and he regards this teamwork idea as promising for further research. At the drama of Peter Speyer (see 2.2.2), the enabler fulfilled both roles (social worker and artistic director) and his experiment proved to be highly effective :-

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1. During 1980 and 1981 the author held several informal discussions with Nadia Razis which proved to be most helpful and encouraging.

The play they performed centred around the history of the men involved in the theatre. They were all from the same farming community where they laboured on the potato farms. The play started with the narrator making an introduction. He introduced the actors and gave a background of what the audience could expect. The life on the farms was depicted and in this subtle way, the mistreatment of the workers was, in fact, exaggerated. The audience was forced to re-examine their own history and areas in their everyday life where they simply accept the injustices of society without any form of rebellion.

The acting was mainly done through the process of miming, thus re-emphasising the "great silence" that surrounds the plight of the workers in the farming communities. The scenes were alternated by various songs, the whole group participated in the singing, but otherwise the narrator was the only person who communicated verbally with the audience. He was the key figure in the play in that he portrayed several roles: the farmer, the foreman and an ordinary worker. This was done in a very effective manner as he portrayed his role skilfully and very realistically. This was possible because of the training they had received prior to the performance (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1978c, 1).

Louis Miller (1976, 240-246) provides an interesting example of original community drama and community social action theatre and discusses in his article "Theatre and Community: 'The tent of Joseph'" how teamwork was implemented in this Israeli experiment. This teamwork approach was favoured by city service officials who were concerned with community organisation, general cultural activities, and youth theatre. He emphasises in his article that "they accepted the above two principles and the technical corollary that two professionals should be employed part-time as a team to implement or promote them - a director of drama and community organiser" (1976, 240).

### 3.2 INTRODUCING COMMUNITY DRAMA TO THE ENABLER

On the basis of the author's experience he believes that the introduction of the enabler to the medium of community drama is a crucial step. He anticipates that the way the medium is introduced will be even more important for the person without any interest in traditional theatre than it will be for the person who already has an affinity with theatre and drama. The author has observed that this first introduction could very well determine his future attitude to the medium. If it is introduced awkwardly, resistance might be provoked. From the author's practical experience he proposes the following pointers for the use of the introducer :-

1. The introduction should be clear and objective and the terminology used must be known to the potential enabler. Community drama is a very practical medium and the uninitiated could easily be overwhelmed should it be perceived as 'highly theoretical'.
2. The introducer must anticipate that the potential enabler might confuse community drama with other forms of theatre and drama when the term is first expounded. The introvert may shy away from it immediately, while the extrovert may be more likely to show a positive reaction.

3. The new enabler should be encouraged to express possible doubts and fears. To many this may appear as a medium which threatens their usual way of operating. For this reason, the ideas raised at the introduction may have to be repeated to ensure that all doubts have been clarified.
4. As long as the basic aim of community drama is understood, the potential enabler can be informed about other relevant aspects at a later stage. The medium is simple, yet its various facets need to be explored and to do that in one session is not advisable.
5. It is imperative for the introducer to be confident and experienced in the use of the medium within the kind of community where the potential enabler is expected to use it. Community drama, being a practical medium, requires participation and experimentation before a person can introduce it adequately to a new enabler.
6. The idea of community drama, when introduced, is most likely to be treated as something new and foreign, something that still has to be proved. The enabler's first practical involvement would, therefore, be crucial in determining future attitudes towards the use of the medium.

The appropriateness of an adequate introduction prior to employment of the medium is aptly illustrated in the following extract from a case study :-

One of the reasons for his success could be attributed to the fact that he had been adequately introduced to the use of the medium. With the other students he received an introduction to the use of theatre and drama in community social work programmes at the University of Cape Town as part of the Honours course in community social work. At Cafda the medium was discussed and he was guided to internalise the new concepts. Mr. Atmore had a thorough understanding of the use of the medium whilst knowing the essential variables that he had to anticipate. He introduced the idea at the appropriate time to a proper target group and thus, through control of the two variables of method and medium, he avoided an unnecessary trial and error period (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979a, 3).

### 3.3 GUIDELINES TO THE NEW ENABLER

Besides the pointers proposed for the person introducing the idea of community drama to the potential enabler, the author now offers some further guidelines to the newly initiated in preparation for the first experiment in community drama. These directing principles are based on the author's own experiences and may serve as a practical check list to avoid the frustration which might set in, should the efforts fail to show the desired results.

1. Do not 'rush out' to try this 'new toy'. Treat the idea with the necessary respect and equip yourself with knowledge regarding all its variables.



2. The introducer may, as a result of his experience, treat some terms casually while, to you, they may be startlingly new and confusing. Do not be too shy to ask.
3. Try to acquaint yourself with the results of the experiments of other enablers. Relevant literature may also serve to provide a 'second opinion' which could lead to further clarity and an objective impression of the medium. In this way, the attributes as well as the limitations of the medium will certainly show up.
4. Do not try to be too adventurous when utilising community drama for the first time. Examine the groups and issues you are concerned with carefully and then decide on the target group with whom the medium of community drama will most likely stand a chance of succeeding. The new enabler might be tempted to select topical issues but if they are of a highly sensitive nature or dangerous to attempt to work on, e.g. 'political' themes, the author suggests that they be kept in abeyance until such time as the enabler is confident and fully experienced in the use of the medium.
5. Community drama contributes to the enrichment of the culture of the community and it is not necessarily built on generalised myths regarding cultural

norms of specific groups. It is imperative for the enabler to be freed from any previous notions on ethnic stereotypes regarding the group's characteristics and to be sensitive to what the participants themselves have to tell.

6. Keep a record of all your actions, ideas and feelings. This information will be most useful in evaluating the performance and is essential to build a knowledge base that can show the direction for continuous growth and employment.
7. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that every community drama presents a unique experience. Clarity on its composition and implications are imperative, but there will always be a risk involved in employing the medium. (The enabler has to maintain presence of mind and allow the group the freedom of choice even if the medium develops in a direction unforeseen at the outset.

The following extract from a case study<sup>2</sup> shows a situation where the enabler was not familiar with all the important

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2. A revised edition of this case study, entitled "The Use of Community Theatre for Introducing Innovations in a Community" by Miss A. Droomer, Mr. A. van Biljon, and Mr. B. Taliep, appears in Ferrinho, 1979.

variables before introducing it to the community. In the case study the author and Miss A. Droomer, a social work student at Cafda, were asked to participate in the implementation of community drama with a community-based group of health auxiliaries in the Montcreef Farm Squatter community (see 2.3.1) :

Van Biljon: I can remember how it all started, going right back to when the health worker approached us about the health auxiliaries who wanted to have a concert to put their role across to the community. When I attended their first session, I thought they knew their role.

Droomer: They knew to a certain extent what their role was, but they had only received training from the expert for about a month and I think it was a bit difficult to have expected them to have internalised their roles as their training was not completed yet. This did not come out so clearly during the first two rehearsals, but at the third, when the children were involved, this came more to the fore.

Van Biljon: You know, Anne, I was under the impression when we started that they knew what was expected of them in the community. When we were introduced to the group, they did not have clarity on these important concepts and, in fact, they were not ready to be introduced to the idea of community theatre.

Droomer: Yes, any further rehearsals would have been worthless without the participants internalising their roles (Droomer & van Biljon, Case Study, 1979, 2, 3).

### 3.4 IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

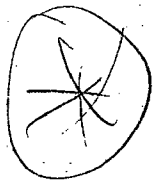
The community in the abovementioned case study was assisted by various 'outsiders', i.e. the social workers and the health community worker. The successful implementation of this community drama was dependent on a thorough understanding shared by all these parties, and ignorance of some of the important aspects could have jeopardised effective teamwork. The enabler had introduced the idea of community drama to the community prematurely and once the idea had been introduced, it was difficult to retrieve it. (Upon its introduction some members reacted enthusiastically while others withdrew. These reactions -- over-positive on the one hand and negative on the other -- could have been avoided by introducing the idea at the right time. The lack of understanding on the part of the community health worker caused even further problems.

Droomer: Pity we could not make use of a theatre in the round at the performance but that was the one idea that was impossible to change as the players wanted to be on stage. I think this is largely due to the fact that the community health worker did not attend the discussions on the concept of community theatre and backed them up as regards the use of the stage. The situation became worse when she supported their request for a microphone (Droomer & Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979, 3).

The author recommends that the enabler should undertake a careful investigation before the employment of the medium,

in order to establish contact with all the 'outside' figures that might be of importance to the objectives of the community drama. In the author's experiments this idea of teamwork was not always easy to facilitate. Community drama resembles community-based 'self-help' projects, and with these projects the author experienced the following :-

With all community social workers trying to make contact with the people, all trying to enlist the same members in the various projects, they run the risk of failing miserably. Community members find it fascinating to be consulted by all these professionals. Like anybody else, they enjoy the status and recognition that goes along with serving on committees, and they do not realise that the various workers are in fact competing for their attention. Meaningful community participation implies meaningful co-operation between professionals behind the scenes.



NB { In short, then, the key to the success of the community social worker is his preparedness to consult and work with everybody who has a meaningful contribution to make to the success of the issue at hand. To involve and consult the people in existing power structures, and as far as possible to listen to their ideas. At all times to have his own facts organised clearly, and to be flexible and compromising during negotiations. (Van Biljon, Lecture Notes, 1980, 2).

The author experienced resistance on the part of the power figures when their support was sought for some community dramas. The reason for this may stem from the fact that they viewed the experiments as 'time wasting', the possibility of a democratic discussion of community feelings might be threatening to their power, or they might be scared of personal criticism. When

the enabler is not a resident in the community, he might be viewed as an 'outsider' with intentions of instigating negative feelings amongst the participants in the community drama.

When the author employed community drama at the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.1), he observed that the medium was unknown to the camp organisers and realised that he had to be careful not to evoke negative feelings in discussing the medium with them. With the first experiment at the camp, they were not keen to participate in the post-performance discussions and the follow-up programme. They were not prepared for the criticism that was aroused through the drama and, although they appeared to be positive about the suggestions raised by the boys, they did not actively carry them through as promised. In the preparation for the second drama at the Camp, the author arranged a discussion with the organisers beforehand with a positive outcome :-

I made every possible effort to contact the camp organiser and eventually managed to trace him telephonically two days before I was scheduled to go to the camp site. I discussed my programme with him and experienced difficulty in explaining myself clearly. He had attended my first community drama and therefore it was not too difficult for him to grasp what I was trying to say. He told me that he would discuss these ideas with the other leaders of the camp and that they would be ready with their ideas when I arrived on Wednesday morning.

Upon arrival, I had a discussion with all the organisers and, because of this discussion, the

organisers actively and spontaneously participated in the discussions that followed the play. This was quite a breakthrough compared with the organisers' passive behaviour the previous year. Through this I learned that it is imperative, ~~especially in these conditions, to involve the organisers.~~ They were prepared for what they could expect and, therefore, they did not feel threatened when being criticised. They co-operated spontaneously in the discussions after the play, as their status was enhanced. They were recognised for their leadership and supported in their capacity as organisers of the camp (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 1 & 6).

The author anticipates that a difficult situation may arise when the authority figures are represented by government officials. Power figures employed in government service may be willing to attend the drama in their personal capacity, but they may be inhibited from making an active contribution by bureaucratic procedures.

### 3.5 OBJECTIVES WITH COMMUNITY DRAMA

The author believes that the enabler's objective in the use of the medium will determine the way that community drama is introduced to the community, the enabler's role throughout its phases, and the success of its employment within the method of community social work. To provide some clarity on the objectives, the author offers the following guidelines :

1. The enabler and group members must all share the same objective. It is possible that the enabler's

hidden agendas may differ from the group's, and that members may differ in their goals individually. This situation must be avoided at all costs. An extract from the community drama with the crèche group (see 2.3.3) illustrates problems that can occur when the same objective is not shared equally :-

During the discussion with the matron of the crèche, I learned that she had some difficulty enlisting the parents' support in the activities of the crèche. The committee struggled to bring the school up to standard and the matron complained that the parents did not seem to appreciate the efforts involved. "If only they would realise what we have done for their children" was her remark. We discussed this issue and decided to use a dramatic presentation of their feelings as a means to communicate and to capture the attention of the parents who usually did not turn up for the meetings when these important issues were being discussed. At the time, the matron was also involved in a leadership training course, arranged by Bakaar Taliep and myself. At this course her problem was discussed and she received further guidance and support.

It was decided that other members of this leadership course (who represented another community), would also participate in the drama and invariably they had to participate in the rehearsals as well. It was difficult to have the rehearsals because we could not get all the participants together at the same time. The people from the leadership course had limited affiliation to the crèche group and, therefore, it proved difficult to enlist their support. Those members attached to the crèche identified strongly with the ideas to be communicated and spontaneously supported all the rehearsals (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 1).

At the time of the abovementioned community drama, the author was disappointed by the seeming lack of interest of some of the participants. In retrospect,



NB  
the author considers it logical that participants will only make an effort to participate once they are strongly drawn into the cohesiveness of the group and share a common objective.

2. Although the theatrical side of community drama is not emphasised, it is possible that the group members' association with the medium may be based on their fascination with this aspect of the medium. Likewise, the enabler may also view the medium as an opportunity for creating 'good theatre'. The community drama of Peter Speyer (see 2.2.2) proved that a 'smooth' production is feasible when training in theatre skills accompanies the introduction and preparation phase, and this possibility shows the employability of the medium for its theatrical merits.

The author believes that before the objective is set the enabler must check his ideas with the sponsors and participants. If the drama is within the goals set for the community social work programme and the objective supported by a majority feeling from the participants, the enabler must still clarify his role with the group. If he is limited to providing 'theatrical guidance', the group can be referred to an appropriate source.

3. While the inexperienced enabler may be reluctant to employ community drama initially, he may also

be inclined to use it repetitively but inappropriately. Community drama deals with people's honest feelings and when the medium is over-used it loses its credibility. It must only be used as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself.

4. Group members may be under the impression that the drama could succeed in fulfilling all of their individual needs. In other ways too, they may portray needs which are not feasible for treatment in community drama. (The enabler has a responsibility to steer the group away from unrealistic objectives and to limit the objective to one main idea. Ideas are best communicated when they are well-defined and structured. If the audience is presented with a variety of ideas, the message that it is intended to convey might be diffused.
5. The participants should share a common belief when they are engaged in community drama, even though they might have different motivations for their individual participation. Consensus of goals is necessary, for diversified ideas can seriously affect the progress of the group. The enabler should be sensitive in bringing diverse objectives to the surface for discussion. Members whose individual needs differ from the common group feeling are bound to withhold the enthusiastic zeal that is very much part of the medium.

6. When the preparation for the community drama takes place over a long period, it is possible that the group's common need may change and it might decide to select a more pressing issue for enactment.

Community life is always in a state of flux and the enabler should be sensitive in responding to these needs. It is imperative that a change of theme should only take place once all the members are in agreement, as every dramatisation demands a thorough understanding of the objective by all participants.

7. Fund-raising might be another objective for the use of the medium (see 2.4.2, Cafda Village Community Theatre). Undoubtedly, the idea of fund-raising can easily overshadow the original objective of a community drama. However, the imposition of an attendance fee could fulfil a useful purpose as it can provide a natural selection process. People who are not really interested will be discouraged from attending, while those who contributed financially might be more keen to 'get their money's worth'. This point is illustrated by an extract from the second experiment with community drama in Vrygrond (see 2.2.1) :-

The play was staged as part of the community festival in Vrygrond. Many people from the community as well as the surrounding areas attended as they were drawn by the various activities which formed part of the festival.

The community theatre was supposed to have taken place in the community centre because, although it was limited in facilities (chairs, etc.), it was viewed as a suitable venue to facilitate a meaningful production.

The 'actors' were pretty nervous before they had to commence with their drama, and when the people kept pouring into the hall, they became quite overwhelmed. They tried their best to talk above the noise but halfway through the performance they had to stop as the audience became quite uncontrollable. It would seem that if an entrance fee was charged, a smaller number of people would have attended and a meaningful performance could have taken place at the community festival (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1978b, 3).

8. Community drama can also be utilised with the specific objective of making a diagnostic evaluation of a group or activity. The diagnostic value of this medium occurred to the author as he was doing the final editing of the thesis, and he expressed himself as follows :-

While thinking about the case studies, I suddenly remembered how, as a result of the second community drama at the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys, I was in a position to make a critical evaluation of the proceedings of the camp. To me, it is most interesting that I was in a position to do this. Although I had only spent two mornings with the groups over a period of two years, I was able to make a critical analysis. This evaluation included the feelings of the boys as well as the strong and weak points of the organisation and administration of the camp.

This, of course, refers to the element of truth in community drama. You cannot hide anything. What is real shows, whether it is positive or negative. I would say that this medium shows

tremendous potential for diagnostic thinking in organisations such as this (Van Biljon, Last Minute Thoughts, 1981, 1).

The author further recalls that he was in a position to make a diagnostic evaluation of an important aspect when he experimented with community drama at the St. George's Home for Girls (see 2.4.3). In his preparation for the drama, the social worker suggested "that the girls might be interested to talk about their future plans" (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1981, iii). The author approached the 'actors' with this idea but immediately realised that they felt totally uncertain as far as their future lives were concerned.

In retrospect, this evaluation might seem to bear little importance as a mere discussion with the group could possibly have shown the same results. In this case, the evaluation and awareness that the author had reached structured the proceedings that followed. The group was envisaged as enacting an issue they understood and had a strong feeling for. If it was not for the envisaged community drama, the author might still have picked up the girls' uncertainty regarding their future, but it might not have shown up as strongly as it did :-

[Social Worker]:

B : In the performance they did not mention their uncertainty about the future. What happened to that idea?

[Van Biljon]:

A : I realised at the report back, in the initial discussion, that they needed far more insight and information on this specific topic. They were just not ready for it and I decided to leave it right there. I think that this very fact could give you an indication of their confusion regarding their future, and if you could follow it up, it will be to their advantage. Once, after a training programme where they have learnt about the job interview, how to approach somebody if you look for board and lodging, etc., they will be in a position to enact it (Van Biljon Case Study, 1981b, xv).

In the two situations described above community drama enabled the author, as an outsider, to make clear evaluations and recommendations. This diagnostic effect was also experienced in the course of his own work when, at the end of a training course for Crèche Management Members (see 2.4.2), the members clearly showed, through the performance, how much they had internalised of the knowledge that was disseminated to them at the training course :-

The use of community drama showed clearly, especially with the second group when they tried to play the 'good' meeting. Although they prepared themselves on what to do, etc., the chairman still experienced difficulties in fulfilling his role. This was really excellent because it showed the reality. There could not be any face saving and nobody could pretend

through giving the 'right' answers, or pretend that they knew exactly how to lead a meeting.

This problem is universal with the crèche community groups. It might seem innocuous and not bearing much importance, but in fact it forms the root of the majority of problems that the Management committees at crèches experience (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 8).

The author holds the opinion that a true diagnosis can only be made when the community drama is carried through all its phases. For example, at the community drama with the girls at the St. George's Home (see 2.4.3) :-

The Principal felt that the message of the play came over strongly. To her, the girls effectively dramatised that they realised that they would not be ostracised for upholding their moral values and that there are alternative friends with better values available. She also felt that they showed what they had been taught in the Home as she and her husband always encourage the girls to introduce their partners to them, stressing the importance of selecting friends carefully (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1981b, xi).

In this experiment, owing to the age difference between the 'actors' and the audience, the discussion and follow-up phase could not have materialised. In the performance, the 'actors' portrayed a message that they knew would be expected by the audience, and acceptable by their authority figures. The author is of the impression that they might have had some uncertainties regarding this topic which would have

been brought in the open during the discussion period. For this reason, the author finds it difficult to agree readily with the principal's opinion, as he fears an evaluation based on the performance only, could be superficial.

### 3.6 SELECTING THE 'ACTOR' TARGET GROUP

One point that has been repeatedly stressed in this thesis is the author's conviction that the participants in the community drama should all share a deep belief and desire to convey their message. Only then would they be able to portray feelings dramatically. When a community-based group is already in possession of these characteristics, the enabler's task is limited to guiding the group's feelings and ideals. On the other hand, when the enabler is convinced of a certain idea, prepared to utilise community drama, and still lacks an appropriate group to facilitate it, the situation may become complicated.

In this situation, the enabler must be very careful and selective when looking for an appropriate body of people. The community drama of Mr. E. Atmore with the hire-purchase theme (see 2.3.2) serves as an example of the selection process for the appropriate 'actor' target group :-



Mr. Atmore wanted to educate the community on the pitfalls of the hire purchase system. The geographic area in which he operated (Retreat) was riddled with this problem and although many people needed to be educated on this subject, he could not start 'anywhere'. During a lecture on the subject, given at a local church, several of the church members had remained seated at the completion of the lecture and expressed their interest in an ongoing educational programme which could equip them with more knowledge on the subject.

This group had all experienced in some way the abuses of the system, and were ripe for the educational input on the hire purchase system. After their training period, they compiled their drama spontaneously and presented a powerful play [community drama] (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979a, 3).

The author holds that the selection of the 'actor' target group stands in line with the nature of the theme, and the enabler's objective. In the 'closed' community of the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.1 ), the author had no difficulty in selecting the target group as all the members were equally keen to evaluate their progress. Furthermore, all the boys' attendance at the camp was proof of their leadership potential.

Should the enabler intend to communicate innovations to an 'open' community, the adopter categorisation and innovative dimension as described by Rogers and Shoemaker can serve as a useful guide :-

The innovativeness dimension, as measured by the time at which an individual adopts an innovation or innovations, is continuous. However, this variable may be partitioned into five adopter

categories by laying off standard deviations from the average time of adoption". These ideal types are classified as: the innovators (2,5%), early adopters (13,5%), early majority (34%), late majority (34%) and laggards (16%) (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, 182).

The innovator is described as venturesome. "He desires the hazardous, the rash, the daring, and the risky" (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, 183). The author perceives that, although the innovator type might be very keen to participate in the medium, the early adopter's performance will be more convincing. Community members are familiar with each other and could question an idea when portrayed by the person who is known to accept innovations at face value. Thus the author recommends the early adopter type as having more potential for the 'actor' target group in community drama :-

Early adopters are a more integrated part of the local social system than are innovators. Whereas innovators are cosmopolites, early adopters are localities. This adopter category, more than any other, has the greatest degree of opinion leadership in most social systems. Potential adopters look to early adopters for advice and information about the innovation. The early adopter is considered by many as "the man to check with" before using a new idea. This adopter category is generally sought by change agents to be a local missionary for speeding the diffusion process. Because early adopters are not too far ahead of the average individual in innovativeness, they serve as a role model for many other members of a social system. The early adopter is respected by his peers. He is the embodiment of successful and discrete use of new ideas. And the early adopter knows that he must continue to earn this esteem of his colleagues if his position in the social structure is to be maintained (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, 184).

The author believes that the participants selected for the community drama must have credibility with the larger community with which they are associated. When the target group is selected from the ranks of the early adopters, the enabler ensures that they portray, 'on stage', a role which is a continuation of their natural, everyday lives. If an 'actor' portrays a message which is incongruous with the everyday behaviour of the person, the audience, with its familiarity with the 'actors', will recognise these flaws and the message will not convince.

In evaluation, the author considers his selection of the 'actors' in the drama on family planning in the squatter community of Vrygrond (see 2.2.2) to be inappropriate :-

In the first experiments [with community drama] the target groups for the participants were not carefully selected and members of the community engaged in these experiments mainly represented the late majority and laggards. If I were to do it [community drama] in Vrygrond again, I would not start with the residual type. I think that it would be far more economical to invest my energy with those members of the community who are really interested and whose own lives are 'sorted out'. Through them the message can be spread to the residual group (Van Biljon, Lecture Notes, 1978, 2).

INTRODUCTION AND PREPARATION FOR  
COMMUNITY DRAMA

The author views the introduction of the community and its preparation for the community drama as quite distinct from the other roles of the enabler. To highlight the delicate steps that need to be followed in this decisive process, and to single it out from the other phases, the author discusses it separately in this chapter.

4.1 THE ENABLER'S PREPARATION

In the first experiments the author was involved with (see 2.2.1), he tried to record the script to help the 'actors' to 'learn their lines'. This approach failed as he was not dealing with trained actors. In this experiment the author played a dominant role. /He tried to allow the participants to assemble their own ideas, but could not limit himself to staying in the background. His active role is particularly evident in his preparations for the rehearsals of the first experiments :-

## PREPARATIONS FOR A COMMUNITY THEATRE

### 1. OBJECTIVES

1. Communication of the "value of family life and the destructive influence of alcoholism etc."; conveying the theme to the community.
2. Educating the community on ways of dealing with community-based problems, showing the value of education (T.C.).<sup>1</sup>
3. Supporting the idea of the courses, trying to convince the 'teachers' of the importance of their educational classes. Providing them with the opportunity of gaining "teacher status". This will hopefully lead to the situation where they will work on the continuity of the classes, without the constant need of having the community workers backing them.

### 2. COMMUNICATIVE IDEAS (PHILOSOPHY)

- you can and must work on your problem ✓
- there is a better way out that you must find, the social work is a resource not the answer ✓
- we must help each other (moral support, etc.) ✓
- knowledge is the answer ✓
- you can get this knowledge at the Training Centre (ones) ✓
- there are already ongoing courses provided for everybody
- if you've got a skill, you can teach (share) too
- if you are a teacher, it does serve a purpose and it makes your life more meaningful too.

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1. T.C. - Training Centre for Volunteers - mobile training centres were envisaged by the community workers as a stimulus for social change. The community theatre was incorporated in this concept.

Teachers	Actors	Audience
- Social responsibility	- propagandists courses theme	
- status	- status	- dialogue
- motivation	- moral support for philosophy	- carry out message
		- motivation to become part of education programme.

### 3. METHODOLOGY OF ACTION

1. { Discussed with the actors the philosophy of the play, helping them to identify with the theme, allowing them to support the philosophy, that is, one woman shared her experience and told the group how she got her husband back while he was a serious drinker. Stressed the role of religion, her patience, the children. Work on the song, improving and motivating them through singing. | Decide on the times for the rehearsals.
2. Motivate them to come to the rehearsals, prepare venue, etc. Practice the play right from the start, discuss the scene first and then make a comment after each scene. Take each scene like that and when the whole play has been practised, go through it without interrupting. (Asked if they would like to make tea).
3. The second rehearsal has been planned to coincide with the meeting of the teachers. Worker will first have to explain to everybody what is happening. Give all the teachers the opportunity to tell something about their classes: when started, length, number of people attending, etc. This session should be treated as a groupwork session, throwing back the questions to the group every time. Stressing: the objective at this stage is purely educational, NOT fund raising or organisational, that can come at a later stage. Get the dates of the classes and attend one of each in the future. Ask them to come on Friday, discuss the roles they will play.

4. At the play, they can get the opportunity to tell the audience about their courses, where, when, etc.

#### 4. THE PLAY

##### 4.1 Scene One: (Gambling Scene)

The men are on the stage, gambling.

Good man stays sober, other two start to drink, they have got nothing better to do; the only thing in life is to drink and to forget your troubles.

Two of them pick a fight, the sober one tries to stop the fight, he cannot manage to do that.

While the two drunkards fight, the wife of one of them skels in the background. At first they do not hear her calling, but then they realise that there is trouble and discuss ways of defending the husband against the angry wife. When she enters they try to hide him behind their backs. At first she pretends not to see him, but then she spots him and, in her struggle to get hold of him, delivers the blows to the chap with whom he had previously had the fight. In the resultant commotion, the husband manages to escape her anger while his former 'enemy' receives her blows. Eventually she manages to get hold of her husband and drags him off the stage.

##### 4.2 Scene Two: (The Happy Family)

The mother and the children are at home preparing supper for her husband. The daughters help the mother to prepare their supper, the other children are busy, mother calls them to the table when she is ready, all of them wait on the father.

When he comes in, they are all very glad to see him, they get up and greet him, he does not go to sit at the table but sits in the best chair, smokes a cigarette and reads the paper.

As soon as the children have finished their supper, they come to tell him what happened in the school, show him their school reports, etc. One can

sing a song that they have learnt in school. The younger ones go to bed, the older sisters help their mother with the washing up of the dishes. When everybody (all the children), have left for bed, the mother comes and sits with the father, asking him about his day. He discusses the work, she gives him his food, and then he describes to her the problems in the other family.

He demonstrates what happens by showing her; she gets a little bit frightened and this brings some action in the discussion. They decide to talk to them because they feel that the children are suffering, etc. They go to bed.

#### 4.3 Scene Three: (The Washing at the Communal Tap)

Before this scene can start, the women must decide when they will enter, who will be the first, etc.

Something funny must happen at the tap - this will have to be worked out.

They can talk about everyday things at the tap, telling each other about the Training Centre for volunteers. Stella shows them what she has learnt. (Hay Box for cooking. Others tell them about the other courses. Stress the importance of the courses for the men.)

One tells how her home has changed since they have all become involved with the Training Centre for Volunteers.

All the ladies leave, except Stella. As soon as she is alone, the wife of the alcoholic appears. They first talk about everyday happenings, the newsboard, etc. She then tells her friend about her problem. Stella advises her :

- she has a very difficult role
- realises that she is the only person to help him
- she can get advice from the social worker, but the answer is not to 'send him away'
- he will not change overnight, but she is doing it also for the sake of her children



- children must be motivated to contribute their part as well, not be afraid of the father, show respect to him, not laugh at him, try to understand that it is a sickness that can be cured providing they all try their best
- faith and prayer
- something to keep him busy, some course at the Training Centre perhaps.

#### 4.4 Scene Four: (Two Men Coming From Work)

The men are coming from work, they are tired, end of the week

- life is one big struggle
- difficult to pay the rent, do not want to
- talk about the importance of paying the rent, otherwise their house will be demolished
- wants to stop at the bottle store to buy liquor, "good" man manages to make him change his mind
- talks to him about his drinking, drunk man tells him how difficult it is to stop drinking
- they sit in the train, mime a lot :
  - buy the ticket
  - waits at the station on the train
  - gets into the overcrowded compartment
  - some of the other women can play the part of passengers in the train
  - preacher in the train, bringing the message
  - encounter with skollies (if there are skollies to play the part)
  - decides to change his life
  - gets off the train, walks past the shebeen, nearly decides to change his mind again
  - go home.

#### 4.5 Scene Five: (Happy Ending)

The man is still tired, but he is very proud of the fact that he has brought all his wages home. "I always blamed you for everything, but I can see now that I am also to be blamed".

His wife cannot believe it, she is happy but starts to cry, asks him between her tears: "... and at whom am I going to skel now". They talk about the future, he decides to visit the social worker at Cafda to help him to work on his problem, his wife promises to stand by him, to help him,

- discusses the kind of courses that they would like to follow at the Training Centre, she also wants to bring in something, wants to learn to budget, start to save,
- asks for the children, she is amazed, first time in years that he has started to take notice of them,
- they come in, but they are still scared of him, they do not know how to react to him, crying, etc.

#### SONGS, ETC.

When the audience starts to applaud, the family on the stage bow, then the 'good' family appears on stage, then all the other players.

Stella then steps forward, thanking the audience for their participation and telling them about the song. She says the words, loud and clear, then the whole group together.

Then she invites the audience to sing with them asking the choir to teach the song to the audience.

They say the words then in verse's form ('spreekkoor'); afterwards the audience gets the opportunity to sing with the choir.

Then the teachers who attend the play, get the opportunity to tell the audience when they are having their classes, inviting them, giving them the details.

Stella can bring her diploma that she got.  
Tea for everybody (discuss this with the actors  
at the rehearsal).

Ask Dougie to teach the others his song On  
Vrygrond (Sonja Herholdt song) What is Family  
Life?

Gesinslewe:

Die ma en die pa en die kinders tesaam  
Sit om die tafel geniet hulle maal  
Hulle is lief vir mekaar, en  
hul staan by mekaar  
en ons hoop julle sal ons volg.

(Van Biljon, Case Study, 1978b, 1-6).

The elaborate preparations for the content of the performance stand in direct contrast with the preparations that the author carried out in his other, more advanced, experiments. In the first community drama at the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1), he had no idea of what was going to happen regarding the theme for the performance. He expressed himself as follows :-

The organisers of this Youth Camp (JAG) approached me to participate in their proceedings. Originally they wanted me to give a talk on community development, something related to the field of citizen involvement, or on leadership functioning in the community. Fortunately they left the decision to me and requested me to take the responsibility for the programme, one evening at the camp. I thought about their suggestions and being provided with an open invitation, decided to use community drama to stimulate discussions at the camp. I was aware of the risk involved in this 'open', unstructured planning, but decided to take up this challenge (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 1).

With his experimentation at the second Youth Camp for Boys,

(see 2.4.1), he could rely on the experience gained during the previous year and in his evaluation he commented :-

If somebody wants to utilise the medium of community drama, it is important that he must be well prepared to know exactly what he is doing. I was well prepared for this experiment and, therefore, I was able to do it successfully. However, the message came from the specific situation ... I was only prepared to use the technique (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 6).

#### 4.2 SEQUENCE OF STEPS

After several experiments with community drama, the author realised that the above described, elaborate preparations by the enabler could be avoided if certain basic procedures were followed. From his own experience, the author now suggests that when the enabler introduces and prepares the group for community drama, he should bear the following in mind: the enabler should only introduce community drama once the group feel confident about their ideas and are keen to share them with other community members; the preparation that follows should not be complicated as the drama in its theatrical sense is not emphasised; only after all this, should the final arrangements for the performance be made.

An extract from the case study with the boys at the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1) illustrates the necessary steps involved in the introduction phase :-

After I had been introduced to the group, I was left alone with them and started to ask them general questions such as their names and places of abode. Their motivation for participation in camp activities proved to be very high and they all seemed to enjoy what the camp had to offer. They visualised the camp as an opportunity to improve their own position. I identified the main leaders. The group was too big and did not allow for easy group discussion. As a result, I subdivided them into two smaller groups consisting of five or six people.

Each group appointed its own leader and I asked them to discuss their experiences at the camp, their likes and dislikes. I also asked for their suggestions to improve the functioning of the camp. These topics were chosen as a result of the initial group discussion I had had with the group before they were subdivided into the two separate groups.

I left these sub-groups to discuss the issues by themselves and when they indicated that they were finished, I joined the two groups again. I asked the group leaders to report back on the content of the discussions in the small groups and one of the main activities they reported on was the idea of standing guard. As the reporter discussed the activity, it drew much interest from his audience and I noticed that they all identified strongly with his narration. My next step was to ask him to show the group, with actions, what he was talking about. He did this without a moment's hesitation. He knew exactly what he wanted to say, therefore he had no difficulty in saying it through dramatic action. After his demonstration I asked some of the other boys to show their comment of [i.e. to act out their comment upon] the same activity, and sounds of laughter and appreciation accompanied their performances.

I then proceeded by asking them whether they would like to demonstrate the other parts of their discussion as well, with the purpose of sharing their ideas with the rest of the camp. Upon this suggestion, the group responded enthusiastically and started to assemble their play (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 1-2).

This extract illustrates how the question "would you like to enact your experiences to the other boys in the

camp?" was only posed after the initial discussion had consolidated the group's ideas. The author anticipates that the group could have been confused if this question had been posed before the consolidation of ideas as the members might not have been clear on their own ideas. In this instance, the consolidation was reached within a short period of time and this can possibly be attributed to the fact that, before the author had met the group, they already had a feeling of solidarity among themselves. The author expressed this solidarity as follows :-

The boys who participated in the drama were a subgroup from the larger camp. They underwent the same programme during the week that preceded the drama and as a result developed a strong sense of solidarity, leadership and other patterns of informal interaction (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 3).

— The steps involved in the introduction and preparation follow naturally when applied in practice. Theoretically the author proposes that they occur as follows :

1. Training, discussions, and group interaction are facilitated by the enabler until the group reaches solidarity on their idea.
2. The enabler further stimulates the desire among the participants to share this idea with other community members.

3. The enabler suggests the idea of 'enactment' to the group and introduces community drama.
4. The group accepts the medium of community drama to communicate their idea.
5. The enabler assists the group who transform their ideas into dramatic action.
6. The group makes final arrangements for their performance.

These steps may not occur within a short period of time as the case was with the dramas at the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.1), and may take place over several rehearsal sessions, as in the case with the community drama in Montcreef Farm (see 2.3.1). Whether the introduction and preparation is accomplished over a short or a long time span, the underlying principle supports the contention that the enabler must keep closely to the sequence of steps as proposed by the author. In the Montcreef Farm community drama, the enabler suggested the idea of 'enactment' to the group (3) before the group had reached solidarity on its ideas (1) and while they were not yet as keen to communicate this idea to the other community members (1 and 2). The author interprets the feelings of insecurity, the group members' absence from rehearsals, and the multitude of other difficulties that were experienced with the drama, as direct results

of the fact that the sequence of steps was not followed closely by the enabler.

An extract from the community drama with the crèche group (see 2.3.3) further illustrates the application of the sequence of steps :-

The plot covered a relatively long period of time and it was interspersed with a variety of important events. The group wanted to include all these details, as the matron saw them as important contributory, historical factors. Thus two major problems were experienced: too much time would have been needed to cover all these aspects in detail, and secondly, a large team of actors would have been needed if the long, drawn-out history was to be portrayed in detail.

I helped the group to decide on the most relevant issues and suggested ways of portraying the scenes where several people could be eliminated from the one scene. On my suggestion, they decided on a scene where they discussed the inspection after it had taken place, rather than the actual inspection itself. If they had to cover both scenes they would have needed a man to portray the role of the health inspector and inevitably the play would have been unnecessarily drawn out.

At the final rehearsal, I noticed that they all felt threatened when I mentioned the fact that it was to be their last rehearsal. However, when we were finished with that rehearsal and they felt secure in their roles, they were very keen on the performance and radiated confidence. Before the rehearsal commenced, I informed them that a video recording was to be made at the performance but not even the idea of being on television could motivate them. However, after another discussion and the final rehearsal, they were keen and ready for the performance (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 1).

The relevance of the sequence in the steps is further emphasised through the problems the author experienced



with the community drama at the Crèche Management Leadership course (see 2.4.2) :-

During the course we often made use of tasks, i.e. written pre-prepared questionnaires were handed out for the groups to explore. In these sessions the members carried out their tasks successfully, without [them asking for] much further explanation. I tried to stimulate community drama the same way on the last session of the course and hoped that the members would be able to develop a dramatic presentation of their ideas, after handing them some task sheets. The prescribed problems were similar to those issues they experienced in their office of service and similar to the topics we covered during the course.

The group of 20 was subdivided into two equal groups and each group was handed one task sheet. On it, a hypothetical case was described, relating directly to the problems they experienced in their management committee meetings. These sheets also included the characteristics of the characters each participant had to portray. Although these descriptions were carefully selected, and corresponded with the ideas of the participants, the problems on the sheets remained 'somebody else's' and were not sufficient to motivate spontaneous dramatisation.

The groups experienced difficulty in their interpretation of the tasks. With only one task sheet per group, they did not know how to share the information and we had to assist them continuously in helping them to interpret what was expected of them. These issues correlated closely with their own feelings (as perceived throughout the course), but without their coming to the awareness themselves, they did not identify with the situation or the characters as described on the task sheets. They might have recognised themselves in the said situation, but lacked motivation to enact the behaviour.

The idea of putting the tasks on the sheets, did not work, especially not the way it was presented. The groups were confused as to who should read the information on the task sheets. The groups were too large and the one sheet of paper was insufficient. Moreover, the tasks suggested to the groups all the problems and issues that they were supposed to have brought forward themselves (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 6 & 9).

In the above case study, the author refers to descriptions on task sheets which might have been accurate reflections, representing the true ideas of the participants. Yet, when the enabler presented these ideas to them (on the task sheets), it prevented them from reaching them (the ideas) themselves. The result was that they were ambivalent in portraying the 'paper's ideas' through dramatic action. The author supposes that the drama would have been more successful if the enablers had led the discussions personally, relying on the task sheets only for reference purposes. In this specific experiment, the dramatic versatility was contributed by one member who was keen on 'acting' and who had some previous experience in community drama. Without this person, the performance would probably not have materialised.

#### 4.3 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE 'ACTORS'

The enabler's relationship with the 'actors' is an important aspect in community drama especially in the introduction and preparation phase. The author perceives this relationship as resembling the relationship of the social worker with the group in social group work. He considers that, to establish and maintain this relationship, the enabler must respect the cultural norms and values of the community. There must be mutual trust and understanding between the two parties which is similar to the contract in social work. ✓

The author discovered that successful utilisation of community drama depends to a great extent on the quality of this relationship. If the participants are suspicious of the enabler's objectives, they will not easily trust the suggestion of acting out their ideas. The author anticipates that there might be a verbal agreement, but without the trust relationship a passive resistance could develop. On the other hand, the group may trust the enabler to such an extent that they will accept the idea of community drama, not because of their own belief in the medium, but based on the strength of the relationship. This situation must also be guarded against.

The author proposes that the enabler needs to be sensitive in distinguishing whether the community accept the medium of community drama on its own merits or because they want to please the enabler. If this is not detected at an early stage, the enabler might experience continuous problems later. The author experienced this in the very early experiments in community drama (see 2.2.1). In his over-eagerness to experiment with the medium, he did not allow the group to internalise its idea sufficiently, and this caused serious problems.

The author believes that the relationship aspect should not be overrated in terms of time. Depending on the enabler's skill and the quality of the common interest among group members, the relationship can be established

spontaneously. At both the community dramas with the boys at the Youth Leadership Camps, the author spent little time on the relationship aspect and that was mainly due to the positive introduction to these groups by a respected and popular group organiser :-

When the camp organiser introduced me to the group, he requested them to "speak up" and not to "save" me in any way. The group was generally very positive and accepted me from the start. After an initial discussion I was able to introduce the idea of the community drama and therefore very little time was necessary for building a relationship with the group (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 2).

#### 4.4 REHEARSALS

It was the author's experience that, if community drama is introduced when the group is ready to perceive the idea, rehearsals can be restricted, if not altogether avoided. Ferrinho describes the rehearsal as follows :-

The players, then, must themselves select the gestures, the words, the movements, which they think best interpret the dramatic experience to be communicated. In this way the message is based on the genuine beliefs and interests of the people. The rehearsal is this progressive process of encoding the players' message which will be delivered when they feel it is encoded in a way adequate for their intention (1980, 110).

The concept of limited rehearsing was difficult for the author to understand. In his early experiments, problems were experienced with the rehearsals as he tried to let

the 'actors' 'learn their lines'. The notion that the drama must be well rehearsed before it can be staged is based on traditional theatre where productions need to be well rehearsed. This is not the case in community drama as the extract from the case study on the Youth Camp for Boys illustrates :-

After the group discussion, I saw that the boys were ready to transfer their feelings into dramatic action. When I suggested it, they spontaneously reacted. The leaders in the groups assumed the roles of the organisers and informally they all made contributions in the group rehearsal, suggesting certain scenes. The narrator discussed these ideas and the group finally decided on a sequence of distinctive scenes.

The rest of the rehearsal went quite well. The group were left on their own and I noticed how they arranged the scenes so as to avoid unnecessary duplication in their performance. They also prepared the scenes chronologically and independently, and without any support from my side, they made the story flow (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 4).

The author found that if the group is not stimulated to arrange their own drama in this phase, they will continually look for guidance from the enabler. For this reason, it is important that the enabler maintains a low profile during the rehearsals, even though there might be a great temptation to 'direct' the group by telling them what to do and how to 'act'. During the rehearsals with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), the author had to hand his pen and paper to the narrator, before he and the participants could reach the point of separating their

respective roles. The participants perceived the author as the 'director', and only after he had expressed his role clearly, were they able to assume responsibilities.

The rehearsal of the community drama at the second Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.1) illustrates the independence of the participants in the formulation of their drama :-

My next step was to ask the group whether they would like to demonstrate all these factors that were discussed, and to do it in the same way as they had just done the demonstration of the kitchen incident. This idea was taken up and they immediately started to rehearse. The leaders in the groups spontaneously assumed the roles of narrators and linked the various scenes. After some discussion and very little rehearsing, they decided on the following scenes :

- (a) Physical training at the camp
- (b) Inspection of the tents
- (c) Distribution of food at meal times
- (d) The lecture on the planning of a mountain-eering session
- (e) The educational film show.

During the creation of the play two of the camp's organisers joined, and observed the action. They abstained from participating in the actual preparation of the drama and the boys carried on with their rehearsal without being embarrassed in any way by their superiors' presence. When I was introduced to the group it was 9.10 a.m. and at 10.00 a.m. the group was ready with the play (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 3).

When rehearsing, the group will require privacy and a quiet atmosphere because disturbances could seriously

hamper the development of their ideas. At the first Youth Leadership Camp for Boys, the author observed the following :-

At the initial stage, when the participants were still busy discussing the various scenes, one of the camp officials turned up and joined the group. He more or less invited himself to join in and I had to resist the temptation of asking him to leave. I was scared that he would disrupt the easy flow of ideas and would inhibit group participation. He started advising the group on acting techniques, such as not to act with their backs to the audience, to talk loudly and clearly, etc. He manoeuvred himself into a position where he took over the group discussion and when the issue of portraying his role was discussed, I asked him whether he would like to take part in the play himself. He probably understood what I really meant and left soon afterwards (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 3).

On the basis of the author's experience, he believes that rehearsals should take place at a convenient venue within easy reach of all the members, and that a stage or any other theatrical equipment is unnecessary. The author experienced, through involvement in these rehearsals, that role allocation takes place spontaneously. The presence of all the participants is required for successful rehearsing and to avoid practical problems with non-attendance, the rehearsals must be limited. The author suggests that the enabler must be sensitive and allow the group to discuss the objective of the drama, should problems with the rehearsals be encountered. With rehearsals kept to a minimum, the performance should follow soon afterwards so as to maintain interest and


motivation and to shield the participants from being distracted. This extract from the drama at the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys illustrates another aspect of the rehearsal :-

When the rehearsal was completed and before the members were asked to take up their duties in the kitchen, I called the group together once more. I asked them whether they saw their friends to be benefitting from their play and they answered in the affirmative. I then asked them whether they would like to hear their comments afterwards and to discuss the issues with them the way we did it. Much to my surprise the answer came: "You mean the way that you discussed these issues with us when you started?" (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979d, 4).

This extract illustrates how the group can be prepared for the post-performance discussion. The author experienced that, if the 'actors' are prepared for this discussion, they will refrain from elaborately drawn out acting. Furthermore, the leader of the group or the narrator needs to be prepared to initiate this discussion as well as to prepare for the termination of the performance. This is further discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.

The spontaneous nature of the community drama ensures that the rehearsals are never final. Kirsty Douglas made a similar observation in her experiments and observed :-





During the rehearsal the story was enlarged with more details being added, reflecting on one hand, the creativity and imagination of the group and, on the other hand its effect upon the members in clarifying their own consciousness of the problem (Ferrinho, H., 1979, 4).

THE PERFORMANCE5.1 PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

An important aspect of the successful employment of the medium are the practical arrangements that have to be made before the performance can take place.

Although they are important, the author considers them merely to supplement the actual performance of the drama and, therefore, it is important that the enabler does not spend more time on them than is necessary. The author considers the shared objective to be the guiding force and, when there is agreement on this, there should be little risk that the participants may request elaborate

'theatrical' arrangements. Weaver puts it this way:

"The keynote of the presentation of these plays is simplicity" (1967, 44).

These arrangements are important for they can eliminate unnecessary noises in this communication medium. The author summarises them as follows :

5.1.1 Dates and Times for the Performance

One of the most important practical issues is the selection of an appropriate date and time for the performance.

The date should coincide with the availability of the 'actors' and the time envisaged for the performance must be conveniently selected to accommodate the audience as well. The author had difficulty in carrying out this suggestion in the Montcreef Farm community drama (see 2.3.1). The participants were from a working-class community and they were committed to the employment situations which included long working hours. Some members' places of employment were far removed from their homes and consequently much time was spent in travelling. Selecting a time outside working hours posed further problems: intimidating gangs of youths, popular television programmes, family commitments, involvements in church activities and religious organisations, further affected the selection of the time and date of the performance.

The selection of the time and date is a crucial decision and the author found that the performance must be planned in such a way that enough time is allowed for the discussions after the performance. Because of the importance that the author attaches to this point, he prefers not to employ the medium if it shows in the planning stage that there will not be sufficient time to complete the postplay discussion :-

#### The Use of Community Drama at a Children's Home for Girls

I discussed the possibility of the use of community drama with the social worker at a children's home

for girls. The social worker was very positive about the idea of using the method within the smaller community of the Children's Home. She explained that there is a problem in the Home in that the teenagers seem to have little respect or concern for the younger children. "They tend to bully them and command them to work for them, move out of the bathroom, shut up when they are watching a television programme of their choice, but talk and make a noise when the little ones watch their programmes". She also felt that "this issue could perhaps be used with a younger group where they could act out the behaviour of themselves and the teenagers and present the theatre to the whole community in order that all might become more aware of the problem of how it affects particularly the younger members of the community. The behaviour also has an effect on staff who have to try and protect the children from too much exploitation or abuse by the teenagers. This then causes tension between the children and the staff and by acting as the staff the children will hopefully be able to feel what it is like to be the mediator between younger and older children".

When we discussed these ideas we both realised that it would be imperative that enough time be allocated to the medium for the results to be effective. Time would be needed to prepare the group (about 45 minutes), the performance should take some time (30 minutes) and then there would be time needed for the discussion period (about 30 - 60 minutes). Due to the programme that is followed in the Home, Friday afternoon was regarded as the best day for the experiment. It was also important to consider that the girls attended school, they would not be home before 2.15 p.m. and there was also time needed to brief the matron beforehand (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1981a, 2).

In this experiment the social worker at the institution could not arrange for an appropriate allocation of time, as requested by the author, and as a result, the author decided against continuation with the experiment at the time. The importance of time is further enlarged upon in Chapter 6.

### 5.1.2 Venue

Once a decision has been made on the date and the time for the performance, an appropriate venue must be found. The author experienced some problems with this aspect as some communities where he worked do not have an appropriate hall or gathering place big enough to accommodate both the 'actors' and the audience. In the community drama with the community of Montcreef Farm, the problems with the venue were overcome as follows :

The area where the people lived did not have a suitable venue. At first the idea of using an open area was thought of, but decided against because it was not feasible. At the time of the preparations it was the middle of the rainy season and to have the performance in the open air on a Saturday afternoon would attract too many of the disruptive elements who were under the influence of alcohol and dagga.

To overcome these problems, we obtained permission to use an empty church hall, a distance away from the area of residence of 'actors' and audience. This hall and Montcreef Farm were linked by a railway line conveniently situated within easy reach. On the day of the performance, everybody arrived all transported by rail! (Droomer & Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979, 13).

The value of open-air venues for the performance was an aspect of community drama repeatedly stressed by Professor H. Ferrinho.<sup>1</sup> In rural Botswana (Kidd and

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1. Other aspects, dealt with in this chapter, were the stage and stage props, equipment, and lighting; the question of 'acting ability' (see 5.2.2); the absence of any need for a fixed or written text for the plays; the role of a narrator; the abstention of the enabler; and children's behaviour in audiences. See Footnote 4 Chapter 1.

Byram, 1978), it would also seem that the performances of popular theatre took place in open-air venues.

The author is not in favour of this idea and, in his view, it is not advisable within the urban communities where his experiments were carried out. The author utilised an open-air venue in his first experiment of community drama in the squatter area of Vrygrond (see 2.2.1):-

The community theatre took place on a Saturday afternoon in the backyard of a local leader's house. Fortunately the host had a high fence around his yard and an entrance fee was charged. That way a manageable audience was accommodated and the disruptive element was discouraged from attending. This natural environment formed an integral part of the surroundings in the community and contributed towards a relaxed and social atmosphere. The audience felt free to participate and interrupted the performance without disrupting the proceedings of the drama (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1978a, 4).

The above-described venue was suitable for the specific purpose and the nature of this drama. This community resembles a rural area in many ways and, therefore, the open-air venue had advantages. In the other communities where the experiments were carried out, it would not be appropriate. When a community drama is undertaken within a densely populated area with overcrowded living conditions, the excitement of the performance could draw many people who might not have a specific interest in the issue. They would then be disruptive of the smooth implementation of the medium. In the Vrygrond drama

(see 2.2.1), the performance drew the attention of drunkards, even though the proceedings were relatively protected from the disruptive elements.

### 5.1.3 Seating Arrangements

Seating arrangements are important as they define the relationship between the audience and the 'actors'.

The author discovered that the audience can become restless when they are not appropriately seated and for this reason the arrangements need to be taken care of before the performance commences. At the community drama with the boys at the Youth Leadership Camps (see 2.4.1), they posed no problem :-

The natural venue for their drama was the one tent where the boys usually had their meals, received lectures and met for discussions. When the preparation for the play was completed, the 'actors' prepared the venue in no time. The tent had rows of chairs and tables and with two tables in the front of the tent cleared, and the chairs shifted to the sides, the stage was set. No other equipment was necessary (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 3).

### 5.1.4 The Stage

The choice of the stage is also relevant for community drama. In the abovementioned example, the choice was fairly simple and the participants were contented with the arrangements. The author has experienced that some

'actor' groups may perceive the stage to be of more importance. For example, the novelty of the curtains on stage and public address systems of the conventional stage proved the drawback for the interest of the participants in the community drama of Montcreef Farm (see 2.3.1). The author regards the use of the conventional stage as not important for the purposes of community drama and in his experience observed it to create a barrier between the audience and 'actor' when utilised.

#### 5.1.5 Theatre Props

A few chairs may be needed 'on stage' but these props should be used sparsely. At the performance of the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), the equipment 'on stage' consisted of three chairs and a small tea table. These furniture pieces could easily be moved around and provided great scope for improvisation for the 'actors'. In the Vrygrond community drama (see 2.2.1), the chairs had a different effect :-

[In the Vrygrond community drama,] an entire lounge suite was dragged out of the house and arranged on stage. This comfortable suite took up most of the space intended for the acting, with the result that the actors all went for these chairs. Once they proclaimed them as theirs, they did not want to move again. The result was that the play was characterised by very little dramatic movement and lapsed into a dialogue with the actors all comfortably seated and the audience bored to death! (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1978a, 4).



The inexperienced enabler might find it difficult to accept that arrangements such as elaborate stage equipment and intricate lighting and sound systems are all quite unnecessary. These technicalities inhibit spontaneity. The author experienced that the 'actors' need to be encouraged to keep their dress natural because they might be under the impression that they need to 'dress up' for the 'concert'. A few basic props may add to the authenticity and assist the 'actors' in portraying their roles naturally and realistically. These elementary accessories may also add to the dramatic versatility and provide added entertainment for the audience.

## 5.2 PERFORMANCE OF THE DRAMA

In this section the author looks at the qualities of the drama, the importance of realism in role portrayal, the specific performance of the 'actors' and narrator, and the enablers' participation in the drama.

### 5.2.1 The Drama ✓

Hansen assigns the following qualities to the play :-

1. It had to be simple and human, yet concrete and definite so that the meaning could be understood at once in terms of the problem.
2. It had to be objective with all sides of the question given equal emphasis.

3. It was not to settle or solve the problem, merely present it fairly from all points of view.
4. It had to be interesting, vital and stimulating.
5. Above all, it had to be provocative so as to start immediate and spontaneous group discussion among spectators (1949, 165).

The author agrees with the qualities as described by Hansen, but in his experiences he found that it is not always possible to present a theme objectively (see Hansen, point 2). Another researcher in this field, Nadia Razis, comments: "Though a heavily biased, didactic and emotionally charged approach may have a stronger short-term impact, deeper, lasting convictions usually take place in full consciousness of all alternatives," (1980, 102).

Owing to the limited time the author allows for the phase when the idea of community drama is introduced, prepared and rehearsed, he concedes that the drama as he sees it is not likely to meet the requirements suggested by Razis. The 'actors', being concerned with a mutual issue, are bound to portray an emotionally biased idea. The author regards this one-sidedness as a natural phenomenon in community drama and quite acceptable. He accepts this because he does not attach any importance to the necessity for the dramatic presentation to 'do all the work'. The performance only prepares the audience and stimulates while the real learning and consolidation of ideas follows during the discussion and follow-up periods.

The following description of the scenes from the play with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3) should give an indication of how the plot can develop :

- Scene 1 : The play starts with the community worker doing her rounds in Lavender Hill. She knocks on all the doors, trying to establish contact and to enquire about the needs of the people. She knocks on the first door, but the response is very negative and she is sent away by the woman who is more interested in her wine drinking than the problems of the area. On another visit she meets another lady who is glad to discuss the urgent need of a day care centre for children in the area. The community worker enquires whether they could use her house and she agrees with the provision that her husband has to be in agreement too.
- Scene 2 : The lady carefully approaches her husband and tries to convince him of the necessity for a crèche. He is not keen on the idea at all and prefers to enjoy his meal, to relax, and to watch his favourite programme on television. He finally agrees, provided that their furniture does not get damaged.
- Scene 3 : The community worker pays another visit to the lady. She is delighted to know that they can start with this project and they discuss the preparation for the children's arrival.
- Scene 4 : The first day at the crèche is marked by a chaotic situation. Several mothers arrive with their children, they pay their fees, discuss the functioning of the crèche, and try to calm the children.
- Scene 5 : The crèche moves to a new venue and the teacher and assistants are seen vigorously cleaning and preparing for the inspection by the Health Inspector. They are not allowed to operate their crèche without being registered and this health certificate is the crucial document needed for registration.

Scene 6 : The teacher and assistants discuss the visit the crèche had from the officials and imitate their behaviour and mannerisms, much to the amusement of the audience. They also discuss their invitation to a leadership course in the Vrygrond squatter area and express their ambivalence regarding attending. The scene ends depicting a session of this course where one member engages in public speaking and a demonstration.

Scene 7 : The group has to move again and this time the crèche moves to its present venue. They have just moved in and need the support of the parents (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 2-3).

#### 5.2.2 Realism in Roles

The author learnt that participants tend to confuse community drama with what is commonly known as 'acting'. The idea that the participants must be able to 'act' is a direct result of this misconception, which may obstruct the purpose of a proposed community drama. Through the author's experiences in the medium, he became increasingly aware that the 'actors' in community drama do not have to have 'acting ability'. Realistic portrayals of roles in community drama are a result of the inner belief in the issue portrayed and do not necessarily rely on artistic talent.

Most of the community groups the author was involved with consisted exclusively of women. When community drama was undertaken with these groups, the participants faced the problem of a lack of male figures when men

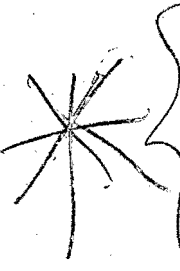
were needed in the performance. In the community theatre with the women's group in Cafda Village (see 2.1.2), the women dressed up as men and their performance was unconvincing. In fact, it had the reverse effect and made a mockery of the males in the community!

The author is of the opinion that the 'actors' do not always have to portray 'themselves'. When they identify strongly with the idea, they might take on the role of another, and their inner belief will come across effectively. Whether it will be effective for one group of 'actors' to portray their drama outside their own environment with other communities (who are able to identify with the issue) is open for further research as the author has not yet had the opportunity to test this idea. In a discussion<sup>2</sup> with June Rabson (an expert in psycho- and sociodramatic techniques), the author learned about a community drama which was originally performed in the Crossroads community in Cape Town. Afterwards it was taken to Soweto in Johannesburg. The audience in Soweto had no difficulty in identifying with the drama. The theme was just as applicable to their situation as it

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2. The author discussed community drama with June Rabson informally during 1980 when a workshop on community theatre was planned. During these discussions experiences with the medium were exchanged and proved most stimulating.

was with the original audience and, according to Rabson, proved to be highly effective.



As mentioned earlier, the author believes that an essential prerequisite for the 'actors' acting to be convincing, would be for them to believe strongly in the group's shared idea. If they do not share a dedication to communicate and do not believe in their message, it will show up during their performance. They might amuse but not convince.

This dedication allows for another important characteristic of the drama, namely, that with the idea well engraved in their minds, the play does not have to be recorded. Leis says that "the script is never final" (1978, 11) and, therefore, it should not be memorised. Kidd and Byram also comment :-



Instead of a heavily scripted approach, the performances are based on improvisation, enthusiasm, and a plot-line which is worked out by the actors themselves. This approach works well precisely because the actors are familiar with the issues and the situations they are presenting..(1978, 172).

An example of the performance in the drama by the 'actors' is depicted in this extract from the community drama with Montcreef Farm, where the acting was spontaneous and convincing :-

Van Biljon : The opening scene with the shebeen queen on the one side and the church scene on the other corner of the stage was striking; it enabled the audience to realise immediately that the wife was one of the main characters, being the alcoholic, with the husband on the other side, upholding strong principles. This scene also depicted her neglecting her children because of her constant drinking.

Droomer : In the second scene the role of the health auxiliary came to the fore strongly, as she invited the wife to come to the Children's Clinic the following day. Sarah, of course, quickly went for support to her friend, the shebeen queen. The next day the health auxiliary came and escorted her to the clinic.

Van Biljon : Yes, the role of the health auxiliary was very prominent at the clinic. She assisted the community health sister in carrying out her duties. She called the people in and helped to weigh the babies. When all the mothers were gathered in the waiting room, she assisted them by interpreting the medical terms used by the health sister. Being part of the community, she knew the people far better than the outside nurse, and therefore she was able to interpret clearly what the sister had meant. The clinic sister does not have the necessary time to interpret instructions to individual patients, but the health auxiliary has, and thus fulfils a great need.

Droomer : Looking back at the next scene we came across the health auxiliary inviting one of the community members to the next health auxiliary meeting which was to take place in the very same house of the shebeen queen; the place where the wife usually goes to drink.

Van Biljon : Don't forget about her friend who was also invited and who mimed her washing role at the only tap in the area. She did this realistically which shows that the discussions prior to the performance definitely cleared her mind so that she could portray her role realistically.

Droomer: The focus of the theatre was the meeting to train the health auxiliaries. There again the health auxiliary portrayed her role in a realistic manner. She managed to transmit the role of the health auxiliary effectively using colourful posters, depicting the various nutritious values of food.

Van Biljon : I observed the audience's reaction and during this scene they listened attentively. I found certain scenes very amusing, but to them it was serious reality. They identified strongly with the actors' performance.

Droomer : The reality was such that the wife, much as she needed the health auxiliary, could not stop her drinking habits immediately. In the final scene, her husband indicated that he still believed that she would change and improve. He also realised that continuing support on his part could help. I think that the audience found this to be realistic. People with deep-rooted problems do not change overnight (Droomer & Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979, 3-4).

With the scenes not thoroughly rehearsed, the author observed that the 'actors' are inclined to forget the sequence of the scenes as decided during the rehearsals. Even silences may occur when the 'actors' forget the rehearsed ideas. The author considers this to be natural and observed that the 'actors' mutually assist each other as they pass on the information by whispering when the need arises. They might also add new words and actions, sometimes changing the sequence of the drama altogether. The author observed that some 'actors' were nervous at first but, once on 'stage', tended to prolong the dramatic action.



### 5.2.3 The Narrator

If the community drama comprises several scenes, the author experienced that a need may arise for a narrator to act as a link between the various scenes. If the drama consists of several complex scenes (see 2.3.3), the importance of the narrator's role increases and must, therefore, be carefully selected from the core group of 'actors'.

In the author's experience, the appropriate person for this role will show up naturally from the group discussion which preceded the play formulation. The enabler does not have to use the term 'narrator' when suggesting to the group that somebody needs to link the scenes, as the leader in the group usually assumes this role spontaneously. The author also observed that when the enabler assumes leadership during the preparation phase, the group will be over-dependent and the potential narrator will not have confidence in his own capabilities. A difficult and almost impossible task will follow when the roles have to be transferred. For this reason, the enabler must see that independence and leadership are vested in the group from the start.

The narrated descriptions, when provided between the different scenes, are not only aimed at the audience, but they simultaneously provide cues to the 'actors', subtly informing them about important details that they

might forget. Thus the narrator provides the necessary link to ensure the easy flow of the play. An effective narrator also prevents uneasy silences developing between the various scenes. The success of the play with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), was largely due to the efficiency of the narrator:-

In this play the narrator's role was assumed by the matron of the crèche. She was a central figure throughout the development of the project and as the scenes covered a time span of over two years, the audience would have become very confused if the scenes were not linked properly. The narrator had to expound on and convey a fair amount of knowledge in between the various scenes (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 3).

With this important task in mind, the narrator has to have a clear understanding of the content and sequence of the scenes. A short note with the summary of the scenes could be an effective support. In the community drama with the Hire Purchase group (see 2.3.2), the author observed that the narrator made use of a note on which the sequence of the scenes from the drama was recorded. This proved to be an important guideline for the narrator who was inclined to be forgetful.

The author also observed that narrators are inclined, especially when they feel over-committed about their idea, to start 'preaching' to the audience. The narrator may become too involved in his role when he starts to explain and interpret the dramatic actions to the

audience. The author believes that the narrator should not interpret the message, as the drama does the latter. The author observed that this situation can be avoided when the narrator understands his role.

The narrator can also participate in the drama, especially if there is a shortage of 'actors' to portray various scenes. The author observed the interaction and variation of roles taken up by the narrator in the Hire Purchase play (see 2.3.2) and the play of Peter Speyer (see 2.2.2). On both occasions the audience accepted this variation and it was in congruence with the effectiveness of the message.

#### 5.2.4 Participation of the Enabler

Community drama is a lively and exciting medium and the enabler might find himself tempted to participate actively in the dramatic presentation. The author experienced this feeling mainly with the first experiments as he was more concerned about the success of the performance than any of the other participants! Self-discipline and control have to be exercised as the enabler's participation could positively cancel the very attributes of the community drama. Kidd and Byram (1978) explain that extension workers took an active part in the community drama in the Laedza Batanani performances in Botswana.

The author seriously questions the wisdom of this involvement as his experience has taught him that the enabler's involvement could cause the other participants to become inhibited. They are afraid to express their own ideas as the 'enabler knows best'. The responsibility of the practical arrangements for the drama is left to the enabler and, worst of all, this dependence will show through at the performance with the 'actors' not being convincing.

During the performance, the enabler may be seriously tempted to try and 'rescue' the show, especially if there are long silences or when the 'actors' seem to have forgotten what they wanted to do next. The author advises that the enabler should resist this temptation to interfere with the performance but must allow the 'actors' self determination. The author believes that the only time interference is justified will be when the 'actors' find difficulty in terminating their performance. At the community drama with the Crèche Management Course (see 2.4.2), the author terminated the drama naturally by applauding. The rest of the audience caught on and followed his action. In this drama the 'actors' had very little time to prepare and they were uncertain regarding the termination of the drama even before they had commenced. Thus the author views his interruption as essential as it prevented the performance from being unnecessarily drawn out, losing its communicative power.

Bert Hansen describes how in the experiments with community sociodrama the groups were confronted with problems without "a restraining arm of authoritative expertness or a polished performance on the part of a speaker" (1949, 163). He continues to explain that "this sense of expertness in the speaker often creates in an audience a self-consciousness and fear of saying the wrong thing which limits or entirely blocks participation in connection with group discussion on seemingly difficult and complex problems" (1949, 163). The author experienced that his own participation had a similar effect on the performance of the 'actors' and thus Hansen effectively endorses the enabler's conscious withholding from participation.

### 5.3 SIDE ATTRACTIONS

Community drama, as one type of community theatre, should be entertaining in order to capture the attention of the audience. Therefore, the drama can be accompanied by a variety of side attractions such as songs and dances. Michael Kahn reports that in popular theatre "usually a three scene drama is presented, interspersed with songs and dances which summarise and reinforce the message in the drama" (1980, 59). These side attractions could contribute towards making the drama more interesting, but by including them in the play, the enabler also runs the risk of transforming the community drama into a

'variety concert' with the entertainment aspect exaggerated.

As a communication medium, community drama must present a powerful and effective message. If too much variety is provided, some of the communicative attributes will be lost, the audience might be bombarded by a variety of ideas, and the main objective of the play could be completely lost. The author believes that side attractions are acceptable when directly relevant to the drama. Radtke comments: "Educational messages are limited to one or two ideas which are emphasized throughout the program or performance" (1978, 3).

Side attractions could absorb precious time and they require added organisation and preparation. In the author's experiences, they proved to be more problematic than advantageous. Participants in the side attractions tended to be inhibited at first, thus creating long-drawn-out silences between the various items. The author observed that in the Montcreef Farm community drama (see 2.3.1) the 'actors' enjoyed the novelty of 'performing' once they were 'on stage'; and as a result completely overstayed their welcome!

### 5.3.1 Opening Prayer

Religiously orientated groups participating in a community drama may request the performance to be opened with a prayer. This happened at the community drama in Montcreef Farm (see 2.3.1). A mere prayer may seem unexceptionable when taken at face value, but when the possible effect on the audience is taken into account, a well-intentioned prayer could cause embarrassment.

Individual members in the audience may represent various church denominations or even completely different religions. The author has noticed that serious differences often exist within this sphere and unwittingly an opening prayer brings these differences into the performance. The message of the prayer may even be in direct contrast to the ideas of the drama; the prayer may inspire acceptance while the drama may very well motivate the audience question and to take action.

### 5.3.2 Opening Speech

Ferrinho (1971) describes the use of the local leader in his experiments with community theatre and mentions that the speaker can reinforce the message to be communicated through the play. The author feels that such a speech, as in the case with the prayer, has merit if the leader is well respected and dedicated to support the objective of the 'actors'; but should the audience

consist of subgroups and the public speaker be in disfavour with some of these sections, his participation may very well cause a rift amongst the audience. He may also grasp the opportunity of a platform from which he can propagate his own ideas. These risks cause the author not to favour the involvement of a public speaker in a community drama.

Community drama displays the added advantage of stimulating potential leadership. By the involvement of the 'regular' leaders, people who might already be over-exposed to the public, potential leadership from amongst the 'actors' and audience members may be stifled. The importance of such leadership is enlarged upon in Chapter 7.

### 5.3.3 The Use of Children

When a community drama is arranged with a message that mainly concerns adults, the enabler could incorporate songs and dances by children as a side attraction.

In the Montcreef Farm play (see 2.3.1), the author found children keen to participate. Their participation ensured the attendance of their parents and contributed towards the entertainment aspect. On the negative side, the author also observed that the children became restless when the drama did not hold much interest for them. Professor H. Ferrinho observed this performance and



afterwards suggested that the problem could be dealt with by arranging for somebody to occupy them while the performance is in progress. The author, however, is of the opinion that their participation is, on the whole, a disturbance to the smooth flow of the drama, and he therefore does not favour their involvement when the message is aimed at an adult audience.

#### 5.3.4 Locally Arranged Songs

Locally arranged songs, sung to favourite tunes and incorporating the philosophy of the performance, can also accompany the community drama. Apart from the communicative power of music and song, it also has a strong emotional impact, creating a receptiveness to the message of the drama. At the second drama with the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys, the author made the following observation :-

The actors were delayed because of their task in the kitchen. While the other gathered in the tent, we waited on them and they spontaneously started to sing their camp songs. At first they were hesitant, but as the singing increased in momentum, they became more inspired and this emotional feeling created a conducive atmosphere for the play (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 3).

The same effect was also achieved in the Montcreef Farm play :-

<sup>3</sup>Van Biljon : The play was preceded by a number of songs from the children in the area and the highlight of the afternoon's performance was the solo sung by Rosalind, who adapted the Click Song using words that were based on the ideas of the play.

Droomer : Yes, she certainly had the audience on their feet as they joined in. They started to applaud to the tune of the music and I was amazed at this warm reaction. It was as if they were being emotionally prepared for the play that followed these numbers (Droomer & Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979, 4).

#### 5.3.5 Local Artists

Local artists in the community may also be invited to participate in the drama to provide variety and entertainment. If they are well liked, they could act as a strong motivation for attendance, especially when the enabler intends drawing a large audience.

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3. The author is indebted to Anne Droomer for her assistance in this experiment.

AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT6.1 THE AUDIENCE AS TARGET GROUP

With the emphasis on communication between the 'actors' and the audience in community drama, it is imperative that the target audience be identified and then encouraged to attend the drama. Ferrinho says :-

Theatre is not, therefore, only or essentially a form of recreation, an escapist fantasy from real life, but a 'judgment' of the life situation for motivating communal action aimed at changing that situation. To attain this the community theatre must be able to attract a large and interested audience and to make them experience the play in such a way that the spectators spontaneously fuse it in their minds and souls with their own real lives (1980, 110).

The author supports this view, but he feels that the audience does not have to be 'large'. In fact, the target group for the audience will depend largely on the nature of the drama, the objectives of the participants, and the support that needs to be enlisted from the audience. Within the 'closed' community of the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1), there was no problem of selecting the audience as all the boys and organisers were invited to attend the performance. With the 'open' community of Montcreef Farm (see 2.3.1), the enabler had difficulty in selecting an appropriate target group.

The author is in agreement that it is vitally important that the audience must have an interest in the drama before finding it meaningful.

Should the enabler be interested in innovations, the categorisation by Rogers and Shoemaker may provide useful guidance. In Chapter 3, Section 3.6 the author has already referred to their innovator and adapter types as possibly being represented by the 'actor' group. The audience group, similarly, could perhaps be regarded as representing Rogers and Shoemaker's "early majority" :—

The early majority adopt new ideas just before the average member of a social system. The early majority interact frequently with their peers, but leadership positions are rarely held by them. The early majority's unique position between the very early and the relatively late to adopt makes them an important link in the diffusion process.

The early majority may deliberate for some time before completely adopting a new idea. Their innovation decision is relatively longer than that of the innovator and the early adopter. 'Be not the last to lay the old aside, nor the first by which the new is tried', might be the motto of the early majority. They follow with deliberate willingness in adopting innovations, but seldom lead (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, 184).

To complete the discussion on Rogers and Shoemaker's theory on innovative types may be added a description of the "late majority" and "laggard" innovative types; although, in the author's opinion, it is not essentially important to reach members from these types directly

through the message of the community drama. The following definition illustrates how they delay accepting an innovation and as it is imperative to have an attentive audience who will actively support and lead in the follow-up programme, the late majority and laggards types are excluded.

The late majority adopt new ideas just after the average member of a social system. Adoption may be both an economic necessity and the answer to increasing social pressures. Innovations are approached with a sceptical and cautious air, and the late majority do not adopt until most others in their social system have done so. The weight of system norms must definitely favour the innovation before the late majority are convinced. They can be persuaded of the utility of new ideas, but the pressure of peers is necessary to motivate adoption.

Laggards are the last to adopt an innovation. They possess almost no opinion leadership. They are the most localite in their outlook of all adopter categories; many are near isolates. The point of reference for the laggard is the past. Decisions are usually made in terms of what has been done in previous generations. This individual interacts primarily with others who have traditional values. When laggards finally adopt an innovation, it may already have been superseded by another more recent idea which the innovators are already using. Laggards tend to be frankly suspicious of innovations, innovators, and change agents. Their tradition direction slows the innovation - decision process to a crawl. Adoption lags far behind knowledge of the idea. Alienation from a too-fast-moving world is apparent in much of the laggard's outlook. While most individuals in a social system are looking to the road of change ahead, the laggard has his attention fixed on the rear-view mirror (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, 184-185).

The author does not see the community drama as able to accommodate all the members of an 'open' community, but

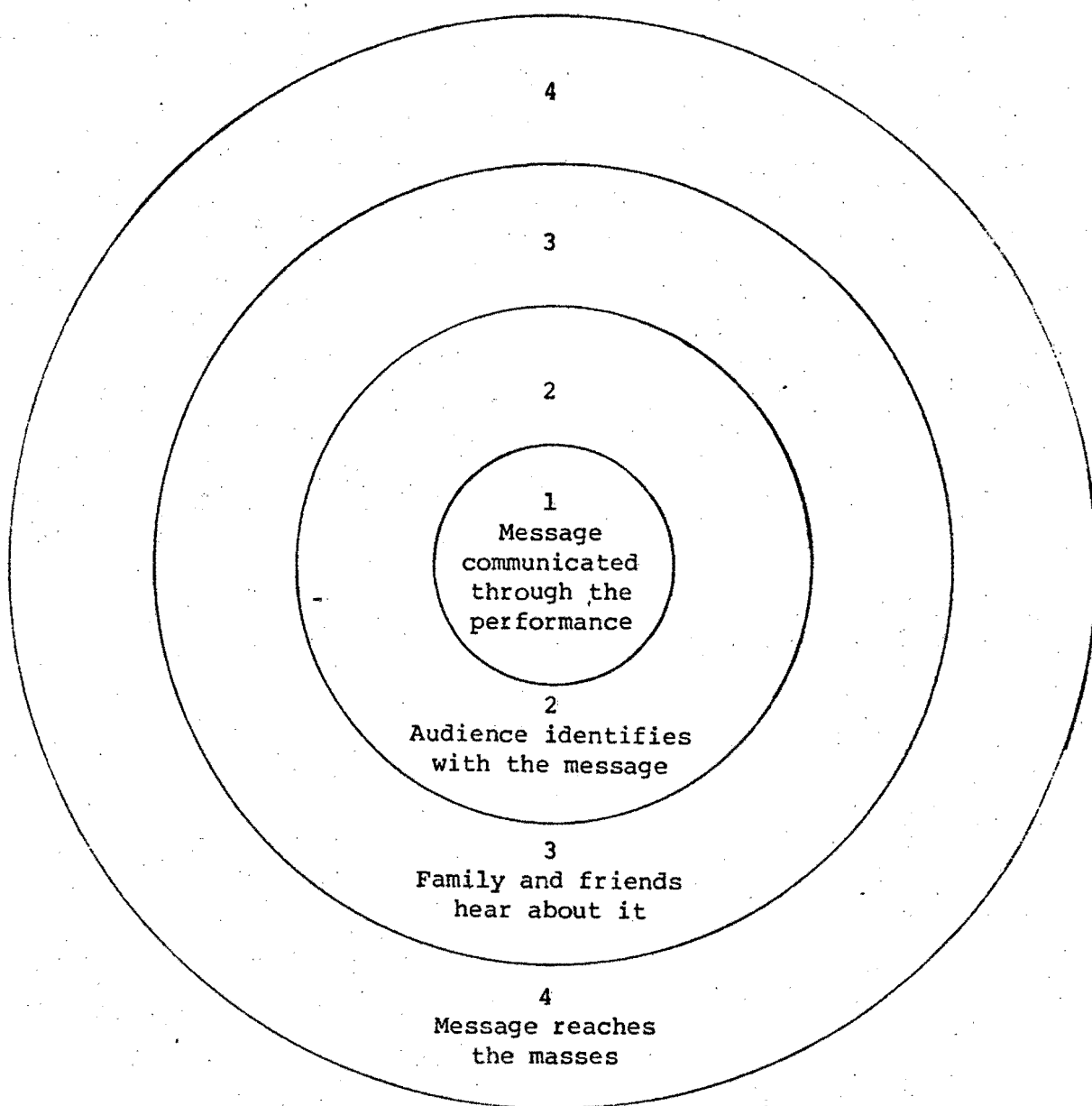
he believes that the audience who do attend can play a role in facilitating the diffusion of the message to the wider community, eventually reaching the majority and laggards types. Ferrinho provides an explanation :-

{ With community theatre, the initial impact is also strong, if not stronger, but with a more lasting effect because the actors remain in the community and tend to behave in a way consonant with the roles they played in the theatre and for which they received the applause of the community (1980, 109).

In the figure and categorisation overleaf, the author illustrates the ripple effect arising from community drama.

The community drama's message can also reach the large audience of an 'open' community when the community drama is performed repeatedly, reaching a bigger target group directly. The author's experiments with community drama were not repeated within the same 'open' community and this idea of an ongoing programme of regular community drama is put forward by him as holding potential for fruitful research.

If an immediate follow-up is envisaged by the enabler, it would be advisable to include in the target audience group the relevant power figures. The advantage of this has already been discussed in Section 3.4).



1. The 'actors', portraying the message through dramatic action.
2. The audience attending the performance receives the message through an entertaining medium and identifies with the ideas portrayed.
3. The message is carried over to friends and families.
4. 'Actors', audience members, and others, continue to spread the message. The message may lose its force but the communication may continue, especially through the practical implementation of the message.

In view of the importance of the selection of the audience, the author proposes that the enabler and 'actors' must steer away from an 'open invitation' when community drama is envisaged for the 'open community'. For example, in the community drama with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), only the parents were invited and invitations were addressed to them individually. On the other hand, the 'closed' community, e.g. the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1) lends itself to an open invitation.

## 6.2 AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE DRAMA

Community drama serves as an ideal vehicle to allow people to see aspects of their own lives being performed by the 'actors'. The dramatisation is a reflection of their own needs and ideas by people with whom they identify. Leis says: "It brings people together to analyse their situation looking at the causes of problems and suggesting solutions through dialogue, attempt to create awareness among the people so that they should adopt a critical attitude towards their own situation" (1978, 4).

Audience identification takes place on an emotional as well as an intellectual level. According to Gerace, "the immediate appropriateness of the arts for education resides in their power to reach the participant on the level of feelings and the spirit" (1978, 3).



### 6.2.1 Emotional Identification

Community drama, being an 'on stage' extension of the community life, is bound to encourage the audience to identify with the drama emotionally. This emotional attribute is an important aspect which could be utilised by the enabler to support the programme of social action envisaged. Ferrinho refers to community theatre and explains that "the theatre creates the feeling that what they desire is possible" (1971, 34). The author observed an emotional identification of the audience with all the experiments he was involved in. However, he finds this aspect limited and would not over-emphasise this attribute within the context of community social work. It would seem that with other experiments in rural areas the emotional value is emphasised more. Kidd and Byram (1978) experimented in the rural areas of Botswana, and Ferrinho, who worked in rural Mozambique, also attaches great value to emotional identification. Ferrinho explains that :-

The people who are members of these communities, like all people with a low cultural level, are more easily influenced by emotional factors than those based on reason. The theatre can help to build a bridge between such an external rational foundation and the elements of the group by creating a public opinion favourable to the adoption of rational planning and an atmosphere favourable for people to become interested in specific information regarding aims and means (1971, 37).

The emotional value of community drama was also enlarged upon by community development officers in Malaŵi.

The author discussed the use of the medium with them during a study tour to that country in January 1980 and the following is a record of one of the discussions held :-

Mrs. M.S. Sichinga, assistant Community Development Officer at the Zomba District Headquarters, explained that the homecraft workers, whom she supervises, held these courses in the villages and at the completion of the course, an exhibition is held. Apart from the articles on display, they also engage in a demonstration, explaining through dramatic action what they have learnt and the advantages of participation in these classes. The exhibition usually draws a big crowd and on the workers' return to the village for further classes, they find that the number of people interested usually doubles.

The exhibition usually ends up in a festive mood as the workers join in with the women in their traditional dances. Although the people arrange everything, the workers do join in at the end to show their solidarity with the village people. A guest of honour is also invited to add status to the event and the other development workers in the area are also invited for the occasion (Van Biljon, 1980, 35).

### 5.2.2 Intellectual Identification

The author regards the intellectual identification as in line with the concept of 'alienation', a term coined by Brecht and referred to by Brook :-

Alienation is above all an appeal to the spectator to work for himself, so to become more and more responsible for accepting what he sees only if it is convincing to him in an adult way... Brecht believed that, in making an audience take

stock of the elements in a situation, the theatre was serving the purpose of leading its audience to a juster understanding of the society in which it lived, and so to learning in what ways that society was capable of change (Brook , 1973, 82).

Although the author regards the performance as fostering intellectual stimulation and identification with the audience, he does not see the performance phase as solely responsible for intellectual activity. The drama tends to be rough, unrehearsed, and dogmatic; the intellectual stimulation it aims at is mainly applied and at work during the post-performance discussions and follow-up phase.

### 6.3 ACTIVE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IN THE PERFORMANCE

The audience could, apart from its identification with the drama, also be provoked to participate actively in the dramatic performance. Kidd and Byram explain that "the spectator is no longer a passive recipient of government messages; he is provoked by the performance and the educational programme to respond in an active way" (1978, 171).

The author has observed audience participation in the dramatic action of the performance difficult to accomplish. In most of the drama with which the author experimented, the audience's attention was focussed on the dramatic

action. They were intrigued by what they saw and would not have thought of participating spontaneously. If the 'actors' are prepared and motivated beforehand, the audience could be invited to come 'on stage' to participate. But in cases mentioned, even though the separation between the 'stage' and the audience was not strict, there was no active audience participation. However, other enablers seem to have had more success in this direction. In her experiments with community theatre, Kirsty Douglas observed :-

The barrier between the actors and the audience was minimal, with the audience often taking an active role in the theatre. The situations portrayed were so real and easy to identify with that barriers were negligible. The actors, because of the spontaneous nature of the theatre, could easily include members of the audience who became over-involved in the presentation, into the play; e.g. a scene portraying the community dentist became so real to one drunk member of the audience that he leapt up, sat himself on the 'dentist's chair' and requested that his tooth be extracted. The actors had no trouble in incorporating him into the presentation (Douglas, 1981, 2).

{ The narrator may be a key figure for facilitating active audience participation. In the community drama with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), the narrator accomplished audience participation naturally in the following way :-

At one stage the narrator could not remember what 'Copo-Kimo' meant. This was the title of the leadership course they attended and in full it meant: Course of People's Organisation. The narrator posed, quite spontaneously, the

rheterical question to the audience. One of the audience members responded to her question and this comment stimulated an intense discussion between the actors and the audience (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 3).

Leis provides another alternative: "Actors can be mixed with the audience so that on some occasions they speak from there so that the audience feels that they are part of all this" (1978, 12). Audience members who are known for their contradictory views may even be specially invited, prepared on what they are about to observe, and requested to challenge the ideas presented. Balcomb refers to an example<sup>6</sup> of active audience involvement in Zambia :-

Mr. Kabwe Kasoma, one of Zambia's leading playwrights, told us of presenting one of his plays to a village audience near Chipata in eastern Zambia which generated so much excitement that members of the audience jumped up and started arguing with the actor who portrayed an arrogant official (1978, 18).

Boal recommends that :-

The actors develop [the scene] it to the point at which the main problem reaches a crisis and needs a solution. Then the actors stop the performance and ask the audience to offer solutions. They improvise immediately all the suggested solutions, and the audience has the right to intervene, to correct the actions or words of the actors ... (1979, 132).

The author questions the feasibility of Boal's recommendation. In community drama, the 'actors' involvement

and contribution is based on a strong belief in the message. As soon as they are asked to move away from this known milieu, they might become inhibited or resort to caricature. However, the author did experiment with a variation of Boal's idea when community drama was utilised at the Crèche Management Training Course (see 2.4.2) :

The first group was asked to portray a crèche management committee where all the usual problems and conflicts occurred. The second group was also provided with the information the first group received and was asked to prepare an 'answer' to the first act. While the 'problematic' group prepared their performance, the second group prepared their 'dramatic answer' which was to follow as soon as the first group had finished. They had to observe the first group closely and adapt their answer to their observations, thus providing alternatives to the 'problems' portrayed.

The first roleplay resulted in a dialogue between the actors. The only person who managed to dramatise some of their feelings was a lady who had had previous experiences in community drama.

The second group knew that they had to reply to what they were watching, with the result that they observed attentively. I also noticed that they met informally, to discuss and prepare their presentation. Remarks of agreement and disagreement further typified their participation.

The first group's performance reached a climax and I terminated their presentation through an applause. The second group joined in and then the two groups changed roles. The second group was far more excited about portraying their feelings and eagerly arranged themselves on stage. During their performance they tried to improve on the mistakes the first group made, and portrayed the alternatives for Management Committee functioning (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 5 & 6).

#### 6.4 POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

Leis says "popular theatre should arouse people's capacity to participate and to decide things for themselves, to awaken their capacity to see themselves involved in tackling some common action so that they play a real part in everything which affects their existence"(1978, 1). The author regards the post-play discussion as the best way to achieve this goal.

Radtke emphasises the responsibility of the enabler to allow for group discussions by the audience and continues that "unless planners and discussion leaders respect the audience and are sensitive to the need to develop their ability to assess both information and entertainment, group discussions can become as one-sided as the performance" (1978, 4).

The concept of the post-performance discussion may seem easy to facilitate, yet the author experienced the opposite. Bert Hansen (1949, 163), in the experiments with community sociodrama, claims that "group discussion came as easily and naturally as conversation around a family dinner table". He continues that "by the use of elementary drama as a 'warming up' process, the socio-drama aimed to reduce the problem to such elementary human relations in such simple, concrete situations so familiar to the participants" (1949, 163). The author

agrees with the 'warming up' attribute of the performance, but experienced that a critical stage develops as the audience may not be used to the idea of 'staying behind' to meet for a discussion. When the 'actors' are not used to the idea either, there is a strong risk that nobody might take the initiative to facilitate discussions. In the Montcreef Farm community drama, the participants were not prepared for this task (see 2.3.1) and the author had to assume this responsibility.

While the enabler may be convinced of the urgency for audience discussion, the 'actors' may not be equally concerned about its appropriateness. // If the narrator is envisaged as initiator of discussion, the enabler must ensure beforehand that this role is fully understood. // Without due appreciation of the need for audience participation, the narrator may be reluctant to initiate these group discussions. At the Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.1) the 'actors' were prepared for the post-performance discussions with positive results:-

I called the group together after their preparation and discussed the idea of audience participation. I mentioned the use of the small group discussion method and much to my surprise, they knew exactly what I had meant. After analysing their positive response, I realised that there could be two reasons for their positive reaction: they had used the method earlier during the camp, or, they were used to the idea as I had used it with them when I initiated the original discussion. When the drama was eventually performed, the narrator spontaneously initiated the audience discussion (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 4).



The author observed that, for the discussion to be meaningful, enough time is needed for the audience to discuss their ideas thoroughly. This point should be considered when preparing for the community drama (see 5.1). The author has been involved in some community dramas where all the energies were absorbed by the performance of the drama. This situation should be avoided at all costs.

The author has discovered that groups who tend to be more extrovert in their expressions may show more feeling in the dramatisation of their ideas, while more introverted groups may be less forthcoming. With the emphasis on the message and not on the quality of the dramatic action, there may be a difference in the vigour of the 'actors' performance, but this does not prohibit intense audience discussion. In the drama at the Crèche Management Training Course (see 2.4.2), the performance was characterised by little movement, action and diversity. However, the 'actors' and the audience shared the same training, ideas, and feelings, and identified strongly with the performance, although it mainly consisted of an intense dialogue:-

The groups struggled at first to discuss relevant issues with the discussion slowly gaining momentum. Later on virtually all the members participated and raised pertinent, often delicate issues concerning the functioning of the management committees of their own crèches. The discussion was immensely intense, everybody was

closely absorbed and, [if] we had the time, the discussion could easily have been prolonged till late. Unfortunately, the discussion had to be terminated for the hostesses were ready to serve the meal that they had prepared for the evening (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 5).

The author experienced that the post-performance discussion can be carried out in the whole audience as one group or by utilising well known small-group techniques.

Discussions in small groups are favoured by the author, but there are times when they are not appropriate. With the Crèche Management Training Course (see 2.4.2), the group of 'actors' and the audience were small enough to facilitate discussions allowing maximum participation. The group was not keen to be divided into small group because :—

The general feeling was that they did not want to miss out on any of the comments made by the other members. I think that they were scared that somebody might say something against them without them being present to defend themselves (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 5).

If the enabler visualises using the small-group discussion method, the person initiating the discussions must have a clear understanding of its application. The method involves some organising, especially if the audience is not used to discussing issues in this fashion.

The author views the narrator (see 5.2.3) as being the ideal person to facilitate the discussions. If the narrator assumes this role of discussion co-ordinator,

the enabler must ensure that he has a clear understanding of what it entails, otherwise he might feel uncomfortable and hesitant to motivate the audience to participate in active group interaction.

Once the audience has been subdivided into smaller groups of approximately four to six members per group, specific discussion topics can be provided to them. In the community drama with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), the narrator subdivided the audience into smaller groups to enable them to discuss the drama's message :-

But here we have the parents, let's ask them how they feel about it, maybe they can give us some answers. Parents, how do you feel about the play? We would like to hear your feelings and for that reason we are going to form smaller groups for discussion purposes.

Mrs. Goliath, you and the others in the one corner, Mrs. Adams from you onwards in the other and the other group can meet right in front. Please discuss what you have seen and select one person in your group to report back after we are all finished with our discussions (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1979c, 3).

Once the audience has been subdivided, these small groups need to select from among their own ranks a representative who could provide a summary of their discussions to the audience at large. The author suggests that they could select a discussion leader and recorder as well, but these guidelines should be applied flexibly with the onus on the groups to discuss all relevant issues in the way they feel most comfortable.

The audience, when seated in rows, may hesitate to form small circles for discussion purposes. The author experienced the necessity to prepare the narrator and 'actors' so that they would assist with this activity. The 'actors' may need to encourage the audience to move their chairs in such a way that there would be facial interaction. Community drama audiences are usually familiar with one another but it would be expected of the discussion leader that, once the small circles had been formed, he would ensure that all the members in the groups were introduced properly if some were not known to the group.

The 'actors' may assist the small groups in their discussions but if this happens they are inclined to dominate. In fact, they tend to influence these groups in the same way as the enabler affects group participation through his direct participation in the formation of the drama and the performance. The author has further observed that in most discussions the 'actors' naturally refrain from participation. Small-group discussions encourage shy members to share their views and limit verbose members to their small circle, effectively preventing them from dominating discussions in the bigger audience.

The author believes that the small groups are not aimed at finality in the discussions. They are a technique to assist members of the audience to clear their minds

the message as performed by the 'actors'.

The ideas raised in the small discussion groups should be channelled back to the larger audience through the discussion leaders and then discussed and clarified with everybody present. At the second Youth Leadership Camp for Boys (see 2.4.1), the audience was divided after the performance into smaller groups for discussions and the narrator instructed them to evaluate the ideas.

The result was as follows :-

After some discussions, the narrator asked the leaders to do the report-back. In most of the groups, the reports given were very positive at first. The narrator maintained a non-judgmental attitude and later on, as more and more groups reported, feelings were raised that had previously been suppressed. They developed the courage and confidence to express their feelings, to criticise, and thus touched on serious issues that worried them. These issues related to the inconsistencies at the camp, as they experienced them during the previous week.

One of these issues concerned an unpopular camp leader whose election as leader was based on his good performance the previous year. During the report-back the boys shared their unhappiness about his arrogant attitude and complained that he acted in a domineering manner. This feeling of animosity was shared by the group en masse and various complaints were lodged against him. The person concerned felt the situation unbearable and left, although he had the ideal opportunity to share his side of the argument as well.

It was extremely interesting for me to observe how they needed the stimulation of the play to bring all these suppressed feelings to the surface through the discussion (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 4).

FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMME

Community drama (as described in this thesis) can be used by the enabler as a powerful communication medium. The author regards communication, however, as only an intermediate goal within the context of community social work which aims at working on the needs aroused through the community drama. Others agree on this point. Radtke says that planners, using entertainment to raise consciousness and awareness, have a responsibility to channel energies awoken (1978, 4). Leis adds that the popular theatre programme should become one part of an integrated programme of popular organisation and social transformation (1978, 9).

The author has observed that the nature of the follow-up programme depends largely on the theme portrayed through the community drama and the participants' objectives. For example, the purpose of the community drama in Montcreef Farm (see 2.3.1) was to publicise the role of the health auxiliary in the community and to gain recognition for its efforts. It was viewed as a means of canvassing so that they would

become involved in the training programme of the health auxiliaries. The follow-up would therefore, have been directed towards a programme whereby the

interested women would be provided with training and active involvement in the programme.

The follow-up phase, as viewed by the author, flows directly from the discussion by the audience. When the small-group discussion method is utilised (as explained in the previous chapter), the reporting from these discussions becomes meaningful only when it is followed up by a discussion involving all the members of the audience and the 'actors'. An extract about the community drama at the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1) will illustrate this :-

Gradually, as the groups reported back on the discussions had taken place in their small groups, the issues raised represented more of their true feelings. Their initial reports tended to be over-positive and I gained the impression that they were not sufficiently confident to say what they really thought and felt. All their reports sounded similar, all praising the virtues of the camp. However, after this 'formal' response, individuals started to comment on serious issues that troubled all of them.

The discussions that followed involved everybody, the camp organisers included. One of the leaders replaced the narrator who had to leave for kitchen duty. The group discussion took the form of a meeting with the new 'chairman' effectively channelling the various questions to the appropriate sources, allowing one person to speak at a time. Following the boys' accusations, the organisers were provided with the opportunity to share their ideas, thus establishing a lively dialogue and debate. The organisers cleared certain misinterpretations and generally explained their motivation for certain attitudes and programmes.

The fact that the contributions were channelled through the 'chairman' and that he maintained

control over the situation, fostered smooth participation without any disruptive outbursts of emotion. The problems that bothered the group, their feelings and their frustrations were being recognised and the order restored.

The discussions continues unabated without anybody wanting to leave the venue (except the one leader who felt too guilty). The discussion would probably have carried on even longer if lunch time did not call them to a halt (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 6).

With this experiment, immediate follow-up was accomplished. The performance motivated the audience to discuss their feelings; enough time was allocated to them to move beyond the superficial; as a result of the enabler's careful planning the power figures were involved; and therefore the needs of the group were met. The camp organisers' participation ensured that the queries were taken up promptly as they were prepared to respond to the grievances voiced. In this situation, the officials had the power to rectify the situation and the follow-up would have been fully completed once they had carried out all their promises.

At the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1) the needs of the community could easily be met. The people in authority who held the key to the answers were present and available for participation. However, this may not be the case with other community dramas. Should a need in the community require action from central or local government immediate follow-up may not be easily facilitated (compare 3.4, team work).



If the enabler of the community drama is in a position of authority to bring about the necessary change, the ideas raised at the discussion hold a good possibility of being carried through. He would know exactly what the feeling of the group was and having experienced the process be more committed to seeing that it was carried through. In his evaluation of the second Youth Leadership Camp for Boys, the author said :-

Ideally-I should be part of the organisation of this camp. This way I can ensure that the ideas that were raised are carried through. Another alternative would be for one of the organisers to learn to apply this technique. If the technique does not carry the necessary 'status', it will always be considered as 'another programme to occupy the boys'. This superficiality will eventually show through and then the boys might be reluctant to participate on a future occasion (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980a, 9).

In the community drama with the Crèche Management Groups (see 2.4.2), the author was in a position to continue with the process of providing continuing education to the individual management committee members at the completion of the course, and the community drama. He was made aware of their limitations through the community drama because "it showed the truth about a common community issue ... Although they had time to prepare themselves for the task, the chairman was still not in a position to carry out the role successfully" (Van Biljon, Case Study, 1980b, 8). In this case, the author maintained his educational role with

the managements and thus shared the responsibility for the follow-up work that was needed.

The answers to community needs may be well above the capability and resources of the community. Follow-up based solely on the energies of the group, i.e. self-help, may be very difficult to achieve. When community drama is implemented without a realistic view of these limitations, the situation may be reached where it is expected of the community drama to accomplish needs well above its functions (compare Chapter 3, 2.5.4, unrealistic objectives). Hancock explains that :-

(The) urban local and central government regulations, laws and bylaws seriously inhibit the free development of the expression of self-help in fields that mean the most, i.e. education, employment and housing. Therefore it is mainly in the social recreational field that self-help can be utilised. Social recreational activity, however, is normally seen as a wealth consuming and not a wealth creating activity, of far more vitality to middle class categories of persons and less utilising to the urban poor (1980, 10 and 11).

However, this is not the situation regarding all community needs. In the drama with the Crèche Group (see 2.3.3), the objective was well within the reach of self-help, as the people involved in the crèche were not dependent on any outside authorities to reach their objective of 'greater involvement in the crèche's functioning'. The performance was marked by its high

degree of dramatic portrayal, attentive audience, and excellent small-group discussions with reports on these discussions. But the limited time did not allow for a consolidation of these ideas and as a result the audience's ideas were not challenged and debated through an in-depth discussion. The commitments made at the report-back session were not carried through as they were not consolidated on the day of the community drama.

The in-depth discussion ensures that the group looks at all aspects of the situation, critically observing all suggestions and putting them through the test of logic. This might be time-consuming, but the author has observed that it serves as a safeguard against irrationality and shortsightedness.

When a representative body is needed to carry out the goals and objectives decided upon at the community drama, this is the ideal medium to provide the appropriate people for the tasks. Leadership is enhanced through the community drama in various ways: when the enabler trusts the participants with the responsibility of taking care of the practical arrangements for the performance, initiative, leadership, and organisational skills are encouraged; the actors develop confidence in themselves and in their ideas whilst portraying them in front of the community; and the audience is stimulated through the post-play discussions and especially when they have to give a report

back and to summarise their group's discussions. Previously they might have shied away from leadership roles, but with the support of their groups, they develop the courage whilst enjoying the new status of representing their group's ideas. At the community drama with the Youth Leadership Camp (see 2.4.1), the author learned from the camp organisers that the leaders in the small discussion groups were all 'new' leaders, while the 'old' formal or official leaders who were elected when the camp commenced were overlooked. Ferrinho says that :-

Theatre reinforces the effectiveness of leadership in a community because it :

- a) helps leaders to fit each specific situation by the 'discussion' on the stage of their roles in that situation,
- b) helps to engineer the situation to fit the leaders by defining for the audience the situation and expectation about people's actions (Ferrinho, 1980, 111).

Maximum participation in the community drama ensures that the people are familiar with those with leadership potential and this familiarity prepares them when an election is called for a representative body. This process is also a safeguard and serves as a natural selection process, with the most capable people proving themselves naturally. Whilst being motivated on the issue, they also commit themselves to the task in the presence of their friends. This commitment could motivate them to see that action is taken.

Once the representative body has been elected, the enabler has a valuable contribution to make. Although the representative body might have the necessary motivation and drive, its members might still need to be equipped with organisational and leadership skills to engage in effective action. The author has observed that a quick response to the needs is important to ensure that the motivation and interest raised through the community drama does not grow faint along the way. It might not be possible to meet with the representative group immediately at the post-performance discussions, but if the group members are interested, they should meet with the enabler within 24 hours after the completion of the drama. The enabler, with his advantage of knowledge, should be in a position to guide the group, to provide the necessary training, and to be flexible in the development programme so as to incorporate their individual contributions.

The author believes that the success of the follow-up phase, as with the other phases, depends to a large extent on the way in which it has been planned beforehand by the enabler.

What the author has described so far could be called 'short-term' follow-up. In his experiments, either the participants did not meet their long-term objectives, and the value of the drama only served for a short while,

or the objectives did not cover specific long-term plans. Therefore, the author cannot commit himself to judging the long-term effect of community drama. It is encouraging to read<sup>1</sup> that community drama could have a long-term effect in a community. Such a situation is described by Louis Miller, who used this creative process in a stress situation in Israel.:-

Miller: My first choice was Katamon, a neighbourhood that has one of the most difficult social situations in Jerusalem. New immigrants from Kurdistan, Morocco, and Syria came there and many had a terrible time. Huge families produced poverty, overcrowding, and misery. Delinquency and drugs appeared in some cases. Where there used to be the complete obeisance of a patriarchal society, fathers lost their authority and children started mocking their parents.

Those people had lost their self-esteem completely. They wouldn't admit that they came from this neighbourhood. They wouldn't admit that they came from North Africa.

Now they have done three dramas in Katamon. The first one was before the October war in 1973. It was called 'Joseph Goes Down to Katamon; which means that Joseph the dreamer is chucked out by the Jews, by his brothers, who need him later, and sent to Katamon. The second play was called 'Dropouts', and the third, which is about to be presented, is 'Plan and Destiny'.

Now the directors of the community program - which includes theater and is named 'The Tent of Joseph' - are people from the neighbourhood. It is the only neighbourhood in Jerusalem that runs its own

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1. Dr. Louis Miller confirmed these facts during informal discussions with the author. These discussions took place during the author's study tour to Israel, July 1981.

youth clubs, sports clubs, and centers in which women look after babies in the mornings. It all came out of the theater (Maskin, 1981, 4).

CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of the main conclusions that were drawn from this work, except where otherwise explicitly stated. Thus it summarises what has already been said.

The author believes that the descriptions in this thesis provide sufficient ground for concluding that community drama as a communication medium can be utilised by the social worker in the community social work programme. If that hypothesis is accepted, there are also a variety of conclusions reached throughout the thesis which stand in close relation to this main proposition.

Social workers involved with and interested in drama and theatre are more likely to invest in the medium, but most social workers can be motivated to participate if they are adequately introduced to it by a suitably qualified person. The initial contact with the medium is crucial, as the success or failure of the enabler's first experiment will largely determine future use of the medium. To ensure the greatest level of success with this first attempt, the enabler should be selective in the choice of theme and of 'actor' target group, and should ensure co-operation with professionals and other authority figures who have importance for the functioning of the group.



Community drama within the context of community social work ensures that the emphasis is placed on the communicative value of the performance, and not on the theatrical aspect. All participants in the medium should share equally in this objective as, if they do not, there is a great danger of frustration when unrealistic objectives are not met.

Community drama will only be possible, and the objectives reached, when a proper target group has been selected as the 'actor' group. When the enabler proposes that the common feeling be dramatised, a sequence of steps must be followed to ensure that the group's ideas will eventually be realised in a performance. If the sequence is not followed in the order suggested, the enabler runs the risk of inhibiting the spontaneous dramatisation of the group's feelings as they will not be prepared to participate in a performance that is not well rehearsed.

16 { The successful utilisation of community drama depends, to a great extent, on the quality of the relationship between the enabler and the group members. A healthy relationship allows the group to follow the enabler's suggestions and to participate with the enabler's guidance. It also calls for the enabler to respect the group's independence and to refrain from any active participation in the compilation of the drama and in the performance of it. The drama belongs to the

participants and the enabler only serves to facilitate the process and guide the participants' energies.

Before the medium can be successfully employed, there are certain practical arrangements that have to be taken care of. The date and time planned for the performance are crucial. They will determine the availability of the 'actors' and the audience, but at the same time, they must be chosen with an awareness of the time needed for all the phases to deploy effectively. The venue, seating arrangements, stage, and theatre props, are of less importance, although the participants might attach more than necessary value to them.

The drama in the performance depends on the nature of the theme portrayed and the way the 'actors' decide to dramatise their ideas. If they believe in their ideas and have clarity on the topic, the performance will be realistic. The narrator has an important role to fulfil to ensure a smooth flow of ideas, especially in providing a link when the drama consists of various distinct scenes. The drama can also be accompanied by various side attractions. These might add to the entertaining aspect of the performance but they are not important as they consume precious time and energy which could be spent more productively on the other phases of the community drama.

An interested audience is required that can identify with the community drama on an intellectual and emotional level. Its members tend to spread the message of the drama in the community and for that reason it is not

important to reach the wider community directly when utilising community drama in an 'open' community.

Audience members could become actively involved in the performance of the drama but their main involvement is reached through the post-performance discussion. The small-group discussion method is best suited to encourage maximum audience participation and it provides a channel for a thorough re-think of the message; but there are occasions when it is not feasible to employ this method.

The 'actors' and narrator must be prepared to facilitate the discussion at the termination of the performance.

If they are not adequately prepared, they might not be able to organise constructive audience discussions.

The discussions should not be a mere report-back session on the feelings of the audience about the performance.

Enough time should be available to encourage the audience to continue with the post-play discussions so as to reach the areas that are not usually being talked about. The real value of the community drama lies within this sphere.

The performance stimulates discussion, the discussions move into areas that are otherwise never covered, and eventually logical and realistic suggestions will be proposed to serve as a guideline for the follow-up action

programme, which can be carried through by a representative body selected by the audience and supported by the enabler.

While the author did the final editing on Chapter 6, "a thought darted" (see Footnote 1, page 2 ). This thought was triggered by the 'crisis' situation that is described in Section 6.4, and for the first time the author thought of comparing community drama with drama as an art form. Conventionally the following are the components ascribed to the traditional drama: introduction, body, crisis, climax and conclusion. The author realised that community drama can be identified by the same components although it widely differs from drama as an art medium. He suggests this comparison :-

Introduction : the enabler's preparation with the participants and the rehearsal for the performance;

Body : the performance of the community drama;

Crisis : the period immediately following the performance, just before in-depth audience discussions commence;

Climax : when, through the audience discussions, realistic and in-depth conclusions are reached on the issues communicated through the performance;

Conclusion : follow-up programme.

From this comparison, two major points arise. Firstly, it demonstrates that the author believes community drama can be carried through to active community participation, not only in the preparation for and production of the play, but also through active audience involvement. Secondly, with the crisis and climax phases ascribed to the period that follows the performance, there appear to be grounds for concluding that the hypothesis from which this present study developed may be at least provisionally accepted.

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